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**SATAN THE WASTER**

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THE BODLEY HEAD

# SATAN THE WASTER

A PHILOSOPHIC WAR TRILOGY  
WITH NOTES & INTRODUCTION

BY

VERNON LEE

JOHN LANE · *The BODLEY HEAD* · W.  
NEW YORK · JOHN LANE COMPANY · MCMXX

**GARDEN CITY PRESS, LETCHWORTH, HERTS.**

## TO THE READER

THE whole of this drama is intended to be read, and especially read out loud, as *prose*; the passages which scan conforming as much as the rest to the vocabulary, the punctuation, the syntax, and the essential logic which differentiate prose from verse. And whatever rhythmical elements have been intentionally introduced, should be merely felt as an indefinable quality, so to speak a *timbre*, of what is in other respects ordinary speech.



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# INTRODUCTION

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## I

THE Ballet of the Nations, which constitutes the nucleus of the following drama, was written, in narrative shape, at Whitsuntide of the first year of the war; and published that same Christmas as a picture book in collaboration with Mr. Maxwell Armfield. It was in its origin merely such an extemporized shadow-play as a throng of passionate thoughts may cast up into the lucid spaces of one's mind: symbolical figures, grotesquely embodying what seems too multifold and fluctuating, also too unendurable, to be taken stock of. A European war was going on which, from my point of view, was all about nothing at all; gigantically cruel, but at the same time needless and senseless like some ghastly "*Grand Guignol*" performance. It could, as it seemed to me, have been planned and staged only by the legendary Power of Evil; and the remembrance of mediæval masques naturally added the familiar figure, fiddling and leering as in Holbein's woodcuts, of a Ballet Master Death.

The bleeding Nations evidently danced to an Orchestra of Passions, of whom the noblest were the most efficacious in keeping up the hideous farandole which they had not forbidden; and Pity and Indignation themselves—I wrote at the time of the *Lusitania* episode—were called in by the Devil when the rest seemed flagging.

This crude emblematic improvisation at first satisfied my need for expression. But the thing once written, I began to see its shallowness. Surely this visible performance was not the only one; human affairs, although at times attaining the grandeur of tragedy, are, after all, of common, prosaic human quality and origin; nay, in themselves not more dignified than

the haggling and elbowing of the hucksters of Vanity Fair. And Heroism and the Great Passions, terrible or lovely, would not have been called in with their various instruments, nor Ballet Master Death given his great Benefit Performance, if Self-Interest, instead of turning on his side to sleep his Sunday's sleep, had kept an eye on the little doings in embassies and public offices and in the sanctums of armament-mongers and concession-hunters and newspaper-trusts.

Recognizing this, it became necessary I should add to Satan's glorious and terrible public exhibition, which I had called the *Ballet of the Nations*, those cinematograph and gramophone records of private realities, which the Waster of All Kinds of Virtue revealed as a favour to the Ages-to-Come, and that fatuous sycophant of his, the classic Muse of History.

After that arose the question of what would happen in the future? Was it destined all to begin again, once the performers had repaired their disarray? Would Ballet Master Death recover from his drunken slumbers pillow'd upon his weary, but ever faithful, follower the blind youth Heroism?

My first answer to myself was *yes*. For so indeed it seemed when I wrote the first draft of that epilogue in the second year of the war. But the third and the fourth ended, and with constant increase of the unimaginable horrors and follies, there came signs that the very excess of them may prevent their renewal in the future. My first sketch of the epilogue concluded with the triumphant exclamations of Ballet Master Death, pulling himself together for a fresh performance and whistling to that docile dog-like Heroism. I ended the second version with Heroism's cutting short Death's drunken self-gratulations, and with Satan's sudden anxiety lest, should Heroism ever be cured of blindness, this present one might have been the last of such Ballets of the Nations. Alas, correcting that epilogue after the Armistice and the signing of Peace, I have had to end once more with a more hopeful view on the part of Satan.

Meanwhile, who and what was Satan ? And what was the real name of his Ballet Master Death ? Little by little it was borne in upon me that the whole meaning of my allegory depended on the answers I was wont to give myself upon certain problems of philosophy and religion : the nature of Evil, the possibility of Progress, the legitimacy of Sacrifice and the recognition of Realities. So I found myself writing the prologue as an explanation, put into the mouth of Satan himself, of whatever philosophy of life my own life and my studies of professional philosophers had left me with to face the cataclysm of this war.

## II

So much for the drama itself. Now as to the Notes thereto, which make up the other half of this volume. My friendly literary adviser—himself the son of the first and kindest literary adviser I ever had—Mr. Edward Garnett, has warned me that this second half is *de trop*, may even be voted a bore. The play, he says, can stand by itself, needs no elucidations. I should hope not. Have I not done my best to make every line of it explicit and to the point ? The play needs no notes. It is the Notes, or what I have presented as notes, which need the play to help them to such readers as I want to get at. So, having insisted on including them, let me explain their nature and their real relation to *Satan, The Waster*.

Once upon a time I wrote a volume of "moral essays" under the title of *Hortus Vitæ*, the Garden of Life. There are, unfortunately, other gardens than that, notably the Garden of Death, Disorder and Ruin, called War. It also has its spiritual, I will not say *flowers*, nor even *fruits*, but just vegetation, of thoughts. And these Notes, which some readers might call not *moral* but *immoral* Essays, are made out of such thereof as I have gathered during these five years.

For, just as every peaceful, pleasant garden means that cer-

tain plants have been sown, grafted and tended ; but likewise that certain others have been weeded out, refused a chance of life both by the gardener and by the other plants this gardener favoured, until some accident overwhelmed gardener and garden ; so also this war, devastating all my usual thoughts, has brought up a crop of other ones which those times of peace had not allowed a chance. Not allowed, because, you see, there were all those decorous, pleasant flowers and fruits one wished to cultivate, a well-stocked garden of optimistic tradition such as required only the tending which is an elderly person's excuse for dawdling in the sun, cooling fingers with watering pots, and hoeing just enough to give the certainty of still having muscles and not yet rheumatism ; an excuse also for such shrewd pruning and tidy tying as gave one, more delightful than any roses, the sense of one's own unflinching discrimination, let alone the contemplation of those visionary blossoms (so far the best part of all gardening and thinking and perhaps living) which had never yet come up but doubtless would some day or other.

I must be forgiven if in these ravaged times I let myself dwell over-long on these spiritual gardens we used to cultivate, and for which the war has substituted, in my case at least, growths of thought so very different, those which have been distilled into this play, and gathered for other folk to distil in the so-called notes thereto.

I will not call such thoughts *weeds*, unless by *weeds* we mean all hardy vegetation one does not like. I did not, in pre-war years, like thinking about Hatred, Self-Righteousness and Righteousness and Fear ; barely about Confusion and Delusion ; least of all about the spuriousness and dangers of such fine things as Idealism, Pity and Indignation. Of course, among these little essays there is none whose germs were not latent in my mind before August, 1914 ; but neither is there one which, before that date, would not have remained unwritten, unthought-out, avoided. Certainly their thought evaded : e.g.

the queries, nay certainties, concerning Patriotism, Unanimity, Self-Sacrifice and Waste. One knew such subjects were there; one knew there was a question called *War*; but covered it all over with other thoughts, more agreeable to one's private contemplation and fitter for exhibition to one's friends. Nowadays I find little else to think about, or rather cannot keep my mind from them; they alone are of the uninviting stuff reality has shown itself to be once war had ploughed up its thin specious surface.

Yes, indeed; this crop of thoughts for which war's ravages have made room, and which war's abominations have so richly manured, is rank and harsh, sometimes nettle-stinging to the touch; its flowers, like those of unsymbolic weeds, are inconspicuous or colourless, without sweetness or savour, sometimes offensive to our delicate nostrils; nor is there among them anything like the aromatic rock-growths, wild rosemary and lavender, of more classic climates. They are thoroughly unattractive. But such thoughts root deep in the *bona fide* soil, mud or shale, of life. The very bitterness of them suggests their possessing medicinal virtues. The very fact of their hardy readiness after so much rooting out by man's sentimental selection, suggests that they embody something—how shall I express it?—well! *nearer nature*, closer to what Browning no doubt meant by the *nether springs*; hence conveying possible lessons of what nature really is; what the real chemistry underlying our spiritual life may be, and what the soil, or if you prefer so to call it, the *mud* of Reality, in which even the noblest life must needs root. It is something in their favour, I mean in favour of such thoughts and facts as these notes set forth, that people have rarely imitated them in paper for the adornment either of altars or of the hats ladies display at social gatherings. At least such has not been the fashion hitherto, and I should be sorry to set a new one in this respect. Indeed, perhaps in proportion to the very aversion lurking at the bottom of my optimistic late-Victorian

heart for such—shall we say?—realistic modes of thinking, I seem bound to recognize that all future gardening or tillage of life (though not life's paper floriculture!) will have to be based upon notions like these which the war has brought up in my ravaged little plot, as in that, no doubt, of many of my neighbours. Such war-thoughts may perhaps teach us to keep our peace-gardens sweet with less waste for self and others. They may, I cannot but hope, provide us with hardier stocks whereon to graft the over-costly, the artificial and unstable, flowers and fruits of such happiness and hope as we have hitherto enjoyed.

Dropping this long metaphor, let me explain that I have put these unattractive essays as notes to my, alas, not over-attractive play, in case some younger readers, or some readers whom the war has rejuvenated in its horrible Medea-cauldron, may, if the play have met their new views, find the same sort of thing more methodically thought out and more prosaically set forth.

### III

There still is, there must long be, so much of self-delusion about the main subject of my symbolical war-play, that I have to face the chance of turning out to have been as deluded about it all as the people with whose convictions I happen to disagree.

One point, however, there is on which no one can deny that I do see matters as they are, namely, the offence which the contents of this volume have already given and are likely to give for yet a while. And unfortunately to many of my friends.

I seem to see how all I have written and said about the war must appear from the point of view of those puzzled or disapproving friends of mine. Nay, every now and then I have seemed to enter into the fullness of their feelings against

me and the few persons whose attitude about the war I shared. I have been subject to occasional moments of what I call to myself "illumination," moments of realizing the inconceivable-ness, the ugliness, almost the monstrosity of my hostile aloof-ness as it must have appeared to those participating in the war with hand and heart. Indeed, I may have realized this much more vividly than the very friends with whose eyes I was, at those moments, looking; since none of us ever bulk so large and visible in other people's eyes as in our own. I know and feel how they *would* have looked upon me if this had not, mercifully, been so. This has been the case more or less unremittingly in a dull, latent way, with every now and then an acute crisis of actual and sometimes overwhelming imaginative participation in their astonished grief or anger at my attitude. And yet, while all this has been going on, never for a second have I repented or distrusted my own attitude; never for a second wished my attitude might be different. My position about the war seems as entirely natural and inevitable given *me*, as I recognize and feel theirs to be given *them*. As *they* feel in the right, so also do I. The more I think over our respective positions, the more I understand both, and their unavoidable opposition. Also how utterly impossible it would be, so long as the war went on, to make my view seem other-*wise* than so much heartless wrongheadedness to those friends of mine. The experiences and habits of mind from which my attitude results are often remote, complicated and by no means always orthodox. Moreover, there is at the bottom of it a large share of what is merely negative, a *minus* in my case of influences, dogmas, associations and habits in which those friends have steeped so ever-since-always as scarcely to be aware of them at all, or aware, when aware, only as that odd vagueness called "nature." Now it is according to such complexes (as modern psychology calls them) of past experiences and influences, of present interests, habits, hopes and fears, that all of us interpret the obvious facts striking

on our senses and feelings. Like the rest of us, I can, of course, see that the sun disappears in the west and reappears in the east, just as if it really did turn round the earth, climb to the zenith and plunge below the horizon. Nor can I demonstrate to others that it does no such thing ; that they themselves, the earth on which we are standing, are doing that *going round*. They feel that they and the ground under them are *not* moving ; by which I mean that all the belligerent peoples equally have felt that, as the Kaiser said about himself, *they did not want the war*. Just as they see the sun in various definite positions as regards themselves, so also did they see their country invaded or threatened, sons and brothers killed, hideous calamities pressing against them. How can the war have been otherwise than wantonly willed by villainous enemies ? How can the sun be otherwise than charioting above and below, round and round, the earth ? The difference between my friends' (and equally my former friends', in the "Enemy Camp") view and my own is that between the Ptolemaic and Copernican conception of Man's soul and Man's affairs. The people with whom I disagree about the war and who disapprove of me, are, as it seems to me, *ego-centric* and subjected to the optical illusion of the *here* and the *now*, that optical illusion which is corrected once we get as far off as we now are from the Gallophobia of Burke and Nelson and even of Carlyle ; once we have moved on to a different *here* and to a different *now*, and can compare and discount temporary perspectives.

But *here* and *now* mean feeling. And though, when implying action it can inflict suffering on others, feeling can also suffer in itself. Already when writing against religious delusions (or what to me seem to be such), I grew aware that when religion is no longer able to brandish the temporal sword or threaten social excommunication against the heretic, it yet retains a minor hold upon that heretic's fears. The unbeliever, no longer maltreated for his unbelief,

hurts those who do not share it, and shrinks with reverent cowardice from inflicting the pain he may see in the believer's face, and may almost feel in his own sympathizing nerves. Similarly with the war, only much more so. Those whose opinions and attitude are orthodox about it have, in my eyes, been abetting, fostering and sometimes bringing about, the most abominable calamity of all historic times. I recognize this all quite clearly, unhesitatingly. But I recognize at the same time that their own multifold sacrifice, and their consequent belief in that sacrifice's holiness, renders them sensitive to the smallest show of impiety or even scepticism towards a belief thus consecrated by their prodigious willing martyrdom. During four long years of our short human life, they have been killing and mutilating, starving, ruining and widowing their thousands and hundreds of thousands ; devastating the world no less with hatred and hatred's falsehoods. For that is war. But I have feared to hurt their feelings ; and I grieve to have done so.

And this brings us back to my *Ballet of the Nations* and what it stands for. I have become aware that even in its earliest fragmentary published version, it has offended some of the people I can least endure offending. And even if they had not told me, I should know wherein the chief offence resided.

“*We know ourselves*” (such is the spoken or unspoken tenor of their blame), “*we know ourselves to be taking part in the greatest and most willing sacrifice ever brought for what to us is the greatest of all conceivable objects. We are freely, spontaneously, deliberately and passionately offering our lives, and the lives which are more to us than our own, along with everything which gives life its sweetness, in what to us is a vast contest between righteousness and villainy, honour and dishonourableness, liberty and servitude, future order and future lawlessness. We know that we are doing even more ; we know that we are for this purpose grasping the weapons and methods we hold most in abhorrence. We who loathe war are making war against those*

*who believe that war is not a crime.* *This*" (said my friends or seemed to be saying), "*this is how we feel towards this war in which we participate with horror but with deliberate choice.* And *you, in this shallow satire of yours, represent this struggle between Good and Evil, this trial of strength between Justice and Injustice, as a mere collective world-cataclysm for which all are equally responsible or rather irresponsible;* you dare to represent it as a mere involuntary, aimless, senseless dance of Death, in which all the Nations, with little to choose between them, join hands in imbecile, abominable obedience to Satan's fiddling. *Is this*" (so ends the spoken or unspoken protest of my warlike friends), "*Is this, CAN this really be, your meaning?*"

## IV

It is. And more completely so, perhaps, than those who thus ask whether I mean it, can, for the time being, quite comprehend. As to the further query, when it is a query and not a mere ejaculation of disappointment, the *how* and *why* such a meaning can be mine, that is not so briefly answered, yet requires answering. Not that it matters a button to those who ask the question, why anyone, and least of all myself, should have come by opinions contrary to their own. But because this *how* and *why* of the opinions set forth in this play and in its notes, may make them easier to grasp by future readers less given to such surprised and distressed—may I again say it?—exclamations disguised as queries.

The reasons I have set forth against participation in this war, spiritual participation by single individuals no less than collective participation by every belligerent Nation, especially my own, these convictions concerning the war's origins and results, these judgments of its moral value, these arguments in defence of my own lack of participation, are not the reason, in the sense of the *cause*, of my inability thus to take part. Indeed, paradox though it sounds at first, I have come by

these views of the war just because I have not been able to be, as the current phrase goes, *in the war*; although once I had come by such views, the holding of them implied that I should *keep out*. It was my initial aloofness which made me see the war as a common catastrophe, in which this country's real danger was its danger as a portion of the whole war-imperilled world, instead of seeing only my country's danger at the enemy's hands, and calling *that* a danger to civilization and the future.

I have said that my views were the result rather than the cause of such aloofness. As to the reasons, in the sense of causes, of that aloofness from the war, they are individual to myself, and do not affect the truth or error of my views; they only explain how I came by them. They are matters of personal biography, of such bringing up and surroundings as have made me know, admire, love, but also mistrust, several nationalities; and while intensifying my appreciation of the splendid or delightful qualities special to each of them, made me incapable of identifying myself with the whole of any, because that whole of any country implied likewise a good many persons and characteristics I do not happen to like . . . And, by the way, all the belligerent nations have acquired in my eyes a common defect: namely, of being belligerents; indeed, I have watched them becoming more and more like one another in their ways of feeling and acting, War having (paradoxically!) replaced the normal division of functions, the collaborating and complementary variety, of the various peoples by the common aims, efforts and methods of reciprocal destruction, until the warring world has become a mere homogeneous mass of systematic and automatic imitation of enemy by enemy: conscription, trenches, poison gases, submarines, air-raids, propaganda of hatred, atrocity mongering, coalition government and postal censure having given Britain and Germany and France, Austria and Italy, a most conspicuous and lamentable family-likeness.

Closing this parenthesis let me say once more that my aloofness from the war, though explicable partly by my previous opinions on certain other subjects (specially those I had dealt with under the heading of "Vital Lies"), is due to personal circumstances and, as already mentioned, probably rather to a *minus* than a *plus*, rather to having missed out things which I had, perhaps, better have had, than to any advantages. Of this latter question I am no judge, but neither are those who complain of my resulting aloofness from the war into which they have thrown themselves. The point to grasp, however, is that being what I am I had to hold aloof. Moreover, that—and this concerns my play—holding thus aloof I have been able to see the war under a certain angle and in certain of its aspects which would have been hidden from me had I, as the phrase goes, *been in it*.

But before passing on to this question of what I have been able to see, by remaining, not like my friend Romain Rolland *au dessus*, but simply *en dehors, de la mêlée*, let me meet a common objection, namely, that one cannot, indeed has no right to, have views about the war unless one has participated in it—participated by belief, and more especially by suffering. As to *belief*, the same objection is made against everyone who disbelieves a religious creed. As regards suffering I maintain that all the suffering of the war does not fall under the heading of death and wounds, terror, exile and ruin, or even personal anxiety and bereavement. Suffering cannot be easily, or decently, gauged. And admitting that the impersonal must needs be less acute than the personal, kind, it has to be remembered that there are emotional compensations in militant hope, in effort enthusiastically put out for victory, especially in faith in the perfect righteousness of one's own cause ; all of which are sadly lacking to those who, like myself, have faith only in peace and look upon the victory of either side as the victory only of war. There are people to whom the war itself has been the greatest suffering, as the fear of it had the

greatest fear, of all their life. But granting that such grief and anxiety cannot be mentioned in the same breath as that of those who have *been in the war*, there would remain to prove that suffering really helps to the forming of clearer opinions and more equitable judgments about whatever has caused that suffering. As regards myself, I own that the sorrow which the war's bare fact has brought into my life, is more likely to have made me misunderstand than understand it ; and if it has made me a partisan against war, what shall we expect of those who have been made partisans against their adversaries ? As regards intensification and enlargement of sympathy, that has doubtless taken place towards those fighting on one's own side ; but it is more than counterbalanced by the addition of anger and vindictiveness on one's friends' account to anger and vindictiveness on one's own, and the utter inability to recognize the bare human nature of those to whom one's sufferings are attributed. Thus the women of every belligerent nation seemed to forget that there were mothers, wives and sisters on the enemy side ; much as the air-raided Londoners crying for reprisals on the "Baby-killers" forgot that there were babies in Rhineland towns and that Allied bombs must surely kill some of them. But whether or not personal suffering increases or diminishes human sympathy (and I think the latter is the case), this much is certain, that since suffering, so long as it lasts, is far the most dominant and exclusive of mental and moral states, it constitutes a bias, and is a cause of delusion.

And now let me come to the things which, to my belief, my not *being in* has allowed me to see. Chief among these are the circumstances and feelings by which certain facts concerning the war, or rather concerning all the belligerents engaged in it, were hidden or disguised from the recognition of those who, unlike myself, *were in*.

## V

*"Then said Jeremiah: It is false; I fall not away to the Chaldeans . . . Therefore the princes said unto the King: We beseech thee let this man be put to death: for thus he weakens the hands of the men of war that remain in this city, and the hands of all the people, in speaking such words unto them; for this man seeketh not the welfare of this people but the hurt . . .*

*Then they took Jeremiah and cast him into the dungeon . . ."*  
—Jeremiah xxxvii–xxxviii.

The sins of omission and commission which brought all the various nations into this war, and those sins' precise distribution and assessment among them, is a question for future, for disinterested, investigation. So long as the war-passions endure, such investigation can be neither adequately carried on nor properly understood. What I want to deal with is quite different. It need not be sought for in the secrecy of archives and memoirs; it has been made manifest, and only the more completely for being manifested unintentionally, in every public pronouncement and private conversation. This very universality is what has hitherto prevented its recognition. But, even more, that such recognition required an observer who, unlike all save the minutest minority of all belligerent peoples equally, happened not to have had his or her heart in the war; happened, as the phrase goes, not to have *been in*. For what I am referring to is the *modus operandi*, psychological far more than political, whereby that very fact of spiritual participation in the war prevented those who did participate from seeing the realities of the case; and in so far prevented their taking the steps towards peace which those unperceived realities demanded. Since, such at least is my contention, the long duration of this war has resulted less from its hitherto undreamed of military machinery, less from the even more unprecedented wholesale fabrication of public opinion, than from the

spiritual mechanism of errors and myths which the vastness, the identity, of this war's dangers and sacrifices automatically set up in the minds of all the warring peoples, interposing the same veil of passionate or expedient delusion between them and what had really happened, what was really happening and what, unless they recognized their common mistakes, must really happen in that future which is now already becoming the ruined and dangerous present.

Foremost among those realities unrecognized during the war is what was happening among all those peoples before they *were in*. I mean in the years when war, instead of overwhelming and transforming all their thoughts with its immediate risks and agonies, was still a mere vague and distant abstraction, unable to compete for men's attention against all their present and concrete interests ; and therefore allowed to steal nearer and nearer without calling forth such continuous feeling and concentrated effort as were required to keep it at bay. For whatever the precise incidents of the eleventh hour ; whatever the shares which history will assign to the various governments, this much is certain : that for ten or more years the representatives of every nation had been laying their hands or keeping their eye upon mutually exclusive overseas annexations or spheres of influence ; entangling themselves in diplomatic and military engagements ; enlarging their armies and navies in avowed competition ; in short, increasing expenditure and other causes of domestic discontent, as well as of international unrest, in such a manner that actual war, even if it should not result unintentionally from all these dangerous proceedings, might be deliberately chosen by one or other of the rival oligarchies in order to forestall financial ruin or social revolution. These things were happening in every one of the great European States, either on the surface or so close beneath it that the smallest public attention would have detected, challenged, and sufficed to stop them. But no attention was paid because

they were taking place according to immemorial usage and precedent. Besides, there was no immediate threat of suffering and sacrifice to the individuals composing those nations, hence nothing which could divert them from their private interests and feelings. Everybody agreed in the abstract that war was the common enemy of all mankind ; but it needed a concrete enemy, a threat of invasion, to unite the members of any nation in unanimous emotion and effort, in war against one another, rather than in resistance against war as such. So it came about that, although everyone had vaguely expected that war might come, when war did come it came unexpected to the immense majority, one might say, to the whole of every nation.

Now when war suddenly bursts out among people who are thinking of other matters, the first thing they become aware of is that, in the Kaiser's symbolic words, *they did not want it*. And feeling certain that it was not of their willing, they inevitably lay hold of the belief that the other party must have wanted and willed it. For when men and women are suddenly called on to brace their wills to self-defence, they unlearn whatever slight habit they may have had of thinking in terms other than those of human volition. With an armed adversary advancing to destroy them, they cannot possibly believe or even suspect that both parties to this frightful and unthought-of encounter are victims of a long, unnoticed, concatenation of causes and effects. Or rather : looking in dismay and anger for a cause of the horror which is befalling them, they cannot but seek that cause, and therefore find it, in the adversary against whom they must sacrifice everything in supreme self-defence. Add to this psychological necessity the essential requirement that, whenever possible, the war be carried into the enemy's country, turning defence into offence ; and you get the appearance that each people is attacked, or threatened with an attack which seems the more monstrous that every people has, up to that moment, been thinking of

something else. Thus we get an apparently wanton attack on Serbia by Austria, on Germany by Russia, on France and Belgium by Germany, and, but for the Channel and the fleet, on England no less. Even the Italians persuaded themselves, during their months of neutrality, that unless they joined with one or other of the belligerent groups, they also would be attacked, or at all events starved by blockade ; indeed, the actual invasion of Venetia three years later has probably persuaded them that they required to avert by war the very catastrophe to which their participation in war had laid them open.

Thus from the very beginning, each belligerent people, aware that it did not want war, was naturally convinced that this war was a criminal attack from the other side. This is, however, only the basis of the fabric of war delusion, only the initial step of a logic of the emotions which is more cogent, more irrefutable, than the logic of facts, for the excellent reason that facts are outside us and can be overlooked or distorted, whereas feeling being in us, being the dominant part of us, cannot. To the modern conscience in time of peace, war is a monstrosity complicated by an absurdity ; hence no one can believe himself to have had a hand in bringing it about. Moreover, the whole procedure of modern war, its initial suddenness, its instant wholesale terrorism and devastation, is a doing of deeds which those who are, or may become, its victims feel to be the work of devils ; while whatsoever similar deeds are done by their own side are felt to be part of self-defence ; felt to be an unwilling sacrifice of civilized man's supreme repugnances, which they add on to the atrocious account of those who seem to force them to it. Thus, war being in the eyes of all the belligerents alike, a matter of warding off immediate or threatened aggression, there comes to be, for each group of combatants, a perfectly innocent victim, namely, itself, and an entirely guilty monster, namely, the adversary ; there is only black and white ; and each party is all white and

each party all black, each in its own and the other's eyes. That much is the primary, the direct mutual delusion of such a war as this present one.

Then follow the secondary, though not less inevitable psychological results. The need for the greatest possible output of defensive effort brings the need for the most complete national unanimity. You cannot get people to fight merely to extricate themselves out of a calamity common to both sides, for the essence of the fighting attitude is that there ceases to be anything in common between you and the adversary. Still less can you get people to fight for what may be the result, or partially the result, of a mistake on their own side. Hence it becomes dangerous to suggest a divided responsibility, or anything short of complete innocence on the part of one's own country and one's own allies. And the most sceptical men, those most disinclined to admit the necessity of joining in, therefore accept the accomplished fact without reservation ; often shrinking, just in proportion to their previous detestation of the war, from any argument, any data, which might diminish their country's fighting unanimity. Had each of these pre-war pacifists stood alone, with only his own safety to weigh against his opinions, he might conceivably have felt it his duty to proclaim them in everybody's teeth. But has he a right to prefer what may, after all, be mere personal crotchets, to the possible safety of countless other men and women, to the future welfare and liberty, as they tell him, of his whole country ? The taking of such a risk for what he and so few others suspect to be the truth may, rather than far-seeing scrupulousness, be no better than a tampering with what belongs to others ; perhaps with their very life, or what makes their life endurable. Where so many are risking wounds and death, or sending their dearest forth to possible destruction, may an honest man cling to mere opinion because it happens to be his ? Besides, can he be absolutely sure that his own unwillingness to take part may not be secretly determined by

selfish motives? Can a level-headed man, brought up on classic and mediæval traditions of military virtue and glory, and on Christian contempt for the mere natural instincts, believe with certainty that he is a martyr rather than a shirker? So he desists from saying, and then from believing, and then from seeing or hearing, anything which, if it impaired his country's faith in its entire righteousness and in the entire villainy of its enemies, might be a subtraction from its energy of self-defence, an addition, moreover, to the infatuation, the credit, the staying power, nay, the aggressiveness of the adversary. In this country, a few thousand men have refused from conscientious scruples to take part in the war. It is probable that in every country unsuspected legions of men have, from equally conscientious scruples, taken part in or abetted it. And having thrown in their lot with the war, the war's fearful realities, the war's passions, have speedily turned such acquiescence into active conviction.

But belief in one's country's complete righteousness has other sources besides dread of assuming responsibility in such terrible odds. There is the decent shame of marring the self-sacrifice of others by the least suggestion of its being misplaced. There is, more potent still, that strange human instinct of meeting any inexorable demand for sacrifice—sacrifice of self, of beloved ones, sacrifice no less of all civilized man's repugnances—with a conviction of that sacrifice being not necessary only, but meritorious; not merely legitimate, but holy; loss, sorrow, and self-defilement being compensated by religious exaltation. If logic is that which corroborates, coerces, nay, produces opinion, then, as was taught by my master Ribot,\* the feelings possess a logic of their own, separate from, often opposed to, the logic of fact and reason, but far more cogent. Now among the unexpressed, irresistible formulæ of that logic of the feelings is that of judging of an opinion by what is suffered for it. Heroism and sanctity are received

\* In his *Logique des Sentiments* and elsewhere.

as witnesses to truth, much in the same way as the vastness and splendour of the temple, the number of the burnt-offerings and votive treasures, even the frenzy and cruelty of the ritual, testify to the real existence, the greatness, of, say, Diana of the Ephesians. Thus, once a country *is in*, its fighting youths, its mourning parents and widows, consecrate its cause with their risks and agonies. From the very first, and in each belligerent camp equally, this war was raised to the status of a crusade, and became dear and sacred to the hearts which it braced or tortured. Now, whatsoever has in this way become holy and endeared to multitudes of men and women, possesses also the power of making them suffer in all their most vital sensitiveness, suffer atrociously and vindictively, should any doubt or criticism be brought against it. They glory in their cross, cling to it with all their love ; and any mistaken person suggesting that it might be laid down is felt to be profaning and robbing their treasure. Their martyrdom has grown to be their life ; hands off it !

Hands off, no less, from that more secret treasure whereof mankind, however lavish of all other possessions, so rarely sacrifices one tittle, perhaps because its vital necessity and naturalness prevent us from suspecting so much as its existence except in other persons. I allude to that modicum of self-satisfaction and sense of consistent self-identity which, to the normal man or woman, are as requisite for daily existence as their portions of standing-room, of breathable air, of warmth, of food and of rest. Those who, after denouncing war as such, abet and aid it, can easily safeguard this hidden store of needful self-approval by discovering and magnifying reasons to justify their change of front ; but better still by denying any such change. Whence the popularity of the plea that this particular war was waged to end all war in general, and, as Mr. H. G. Wells was the first to put it, *that the sword drawn against the enemy was a sword drawn in defence of peace.*

In this manner do some of our most creditable feelings and

habits come between disinterested curiosity about the war's moral status and the people engaged in that war. These honourable motives have, however, been eked out, indeed increased, in their mythopœic efficacy, by sundry other feelings less avowable but quite as natural : the hankering after imitating others, but also after being imitated, and having one's own decisions justified by one's neighbours ; the horror as of the void, of feeling isolated, out in the cold. Similarly by that innate demand for fairness, which claims most especially that others should duly partake in whatever sacrifice oneself has made ; and all those insidious forms of jealousy which, by insisting on conformity, have done so much to keep up the moral standard of all times ; and which, in time of war, have so insisted on uniformity of action and unanimity of views. To all which must be added the paltry but potent circumstance that criticism of a man's views, especially when those views have cost practical sacrifices on his part, constitutes a reflection on his wisdom ; and, wherever unanimity already prevails, a positive outrage on the community of which that man is a representative member. Thus does heresy become sacrilege and treason.

Such are some of the intellectual deteriorations, moreover, if we hold intellectual integrity to be a moral virtue, the moral ones, which "*being in*" produces in the multitudes of men and women who suddenly find themselves engaged in a war which they are keenly aware they did not want.

Other psychological necessities are at work in those who govern each country. Through ambition or fear, through rashness or tortuousness, or happy-go-lucky slackness, perhaps through circumstances for which they are not at all answerable, especially their own mentality and traditions, these leaders have plunged or floundered into acts involving thousand-, nay, million-fold tragic possibilities. Their power and prestige can be saved, their wisdom and virtue vindicated, only by the victory of their own side. That victory can be

pursued, like the gambler's, only by continuing the game. Now the continuation of that game of war depends upon such an unceasing output of favourable beliefs, on such keeping up of all the passions of pride and hatred, fear, and aggressiveness, as make the fighting nations willingly pour out more and more life and treasure and accept more and more frightful odds. To each side equally a stalemate or the acceptance of mediation, although perhaps the most direct way to present, and the best warrant for future peace, merely implies that the government has miscalculated and failed. Hence the denunciation of what are called "peace-traps"; hence constantly increased war propaganda, and, naturally, more and more rigorous suppression of all facts and ideas which might run counter to it.

Thus is all doubt of, all inquiry into, the theory that only one side is in the right, and only one in the wrong, automatically stopped off by the fact of a country *being in*. They are penalized first by private scruple and reluctance towards individual responsibility; they are penalized more and more by unorganized, inevitable convergence of opinion in multitudes submitted to the same hopes and fears and sacrifices; they are penalized by intentional propaganda, by spontaneous or organized mob violence, and finally by police measures. Independent thought is silenced from the first; independent thinkers end by being imprisoned. Thus in the war-religion, as in other religions, certain beliefs begin by being the spontaneous outcome of passion, tradition, circumstances and mutual imitation, until by dint of propaganda and persecution, delusions and superstitions come to be established and endowed as obligatory dogmas.

Let me remind my reader that this description applies not to one set of belligerents, but to both. I have nothing to do with what has happened in this country or in that country, but only with such things as, given men's feelings and men's intellects, could not fail to happen in every country engaged

in such a war as this one. If my observation of the country which I know best, because it is my own, has led to the above description, it is only in so far as such observation has made me inquire into the fundamental psychological necessities which govern mankind equally everywhere, a knowledge of which belongs to the modern study of feeling and thought and their joint offspring *opinion*. Should any reader object that none, or not all, of these things have happened in his particular circle of acquaintance, I should merely ask by what psychological processes he explains these alleged exceptions. For of all possible studies, that of war-delusion and war-superstition puts one most out of conceit with generalization from single, and mainly anecdotal, instances, and with that controversial method which challenges the opponent to "name six."

Let me add a last proviso. In speaking of *war-delusion* and *war-superstition*, I do not intend to exclude the possibility of some of these beliefs turning out to coincide partially or even wholly with real facts. It is not lack of such coincidence with real facts which constitutes a delusion or superstition ; what does, is that the belief, to which we must apply either of these names, is held irrespective of coincidence with real facts, and for motives which would disregard, distort or deny whatever does not happen to coincide with *their* requirements. A doting mother may, by an unusual chance, have given birth to a son who is really a genius ; but she would have believed him to be one even if he had been an obvious mediocrity. A sufferer from mania of persecution may occasionally be surrounded by spies, but he would anyhow have accused his most faithful friends of being such. That is delusion. In the same way the bone of a defunct saint may, by some obscure action of auto-suggestion, effectuate the cure of an hysterick ; but Newman thought such cures were due to the saint's sanctity and that it was his duty to believe this ; that is superstition. Similarly it is just possible that either the

Kaiser or Sir Edward Grey may prove to have deliberately plotted this war ; but when an Englishman accepts the first, and a German accepts the second, of these views, for gospel truth, these two conflicting and reciprocally destructive opinions have got one fact in common, namely : that the Englishman and the German are both trying to put the responsibility on the enemy ; or, briefly, that both of them are victims of war delusion and war superstition, which either disdains facts or uses them solely for its own purposes.

Such war delusions and war superstitions are, moreover, kept up by one of the unsuspected causes which have kept up the war itself : the gratification afforded thereby to cravings usually unsatisfied. I am not speaking of the desire for bullying and cruelty, nor even of such pugnacity as might be turned to better uses. War gratifies men's longings in ways rightly accounted virtuous, although of their virtue, to quote my own Satan, war has made a vice : discipline, abnegation, endurance. What is equally important, war abolishes the frequent suffering due to human loneliness and shyness, eking out by the same remedy, namely *unanimity*, the individual's even more frequent sense of doubt and insufficiency. Moreover, as is expressed in the extremely suggestive last conversations in Mr. H. G. Wells' *Joan and Peter*, war gives the life-enhancing and power-multiplying feeling of purpose to men ordinarily at a loose end, or idly pulled hither and thither by their own appetites ; it affords an outward aim for those whose energy is too intermittent or whose innate organization is too rudimentary to give them an inner aim of their own. Thus war, which destroys so many of the finest, of the most highly organized, individuals, oddly enough nurses into satisfaction with life a perhaps equal number of mediocrities or semi-failures. And in war's invisible shrine there hang, like ex-votos, rows and rows of moral crutches.

## VI

*Quand on leur demande pourquoi ils se battent, ils disent : "Pour sauver mon pays." De l'autre côté des campagnes immenses . . . les autres—les miens . . . ont la face tendue en avant, ils scrutent, ils flairent.*

—“Pourquoi te bats-tu ?”

—“Pour sauver mon pays.”

*Les deux réponses sont tombées pareilles dans la distance comme les deux notes d'un glas, pareilles comme les voix du canon. . . .*

*Et ces deux moitiés de la guerre continuent . . . à creuser, leur fosse . . . Elles sont séparées par tout ce qui sépare, et par des morts, des morts, et sans cesse rejetées chacune dans ses îles pantelantes par des feux sacrés et des fleuves noirs, et par l'héroïsme et par la haine.—BARBUSSE, “Clarté,” XVI.*

Even now that the price in lives has been paid and the debt in future ruin can no longer be cancelled, people are persuading each other and themselves that they would gladly incur it over again, perhaps even with interest. Quite naturally, bereaved parents, having thus lost their boys, will go on in the consoling belief that they would give them again for the sake of whatever this war has attained. While, as regards our public men and our priests and prophets, they, like the rest of us, had been brought up to expiate mistakes by the misery called shame or remorse, with the evident result that they have learned to persuade themselves of there being nothing whatever about which they need be ashamed or remorseful. Most persons, at all events among the nations accounted the winners, will therefore maintain that whatever has been bought by such a war must have been cheap at the price, indeed inestimable. The aim must have been worth the means when the means have been such as these. So the aim, rather than defined as any concrete, any temporal,

advantage, about whose attainment (for instance future peace) there might be difference of opinion, has been declared to be some supreme good, which, being an abstraction and an article of faith, is less exposed to criticism. This observation leads me to another item which, standing, as I have done, aside from the war, has appeared to me to form part of the mentality of those who have *been in*. One was brought up to think, and sometimes even thought, that mankind possesses an unshakable anchor against the tides and storms of passion and delusion, namely, the ever-stable impersonalities called Principles and Ideals. I have come to wonder whether of all the objects of man's most personal attachments, of all the causes of his passionate delusions, there are any as dangerous as these alleged impersonalities. It is, of course, true that Principles and Ideals, especially in their humbler forms of standards, usages and commandments, can steady man against the buffets of passion and the floods of delusion. But on one condition only: that these oppose them. For when, as in war time, the Principle, the Ideal, the Standard, Usage or Commandment, happens to be on the same side as the passions and delusions, then this mechanism of moral and intellectual moorage becomes a mere hulk, clinging to which, as it floats on the dominant currents, we become only the more submerged and blinded by the perilous seas of unreality. Since an Ideal, a Principle, a Standard, whenever unanimously bowed to, becomes *ipso facto* supreme and perfect like a godhead. And any individual attempt to examine, to analyse, to appraise it for good and evil, becomes a sacrilegious outrage from which we shrink with the taboo-horror inherited from our own infancy and from that of our race. What self-respecting man or woman can openly refuse to bring a sacrifice for the common good, or will deliberately hold aloof from a good cause? Now when the community exacts a sacrifice it is always for the common good; nor has any modern war been waged unless those waging it admitted their cause to be a

good one. Good indeed it has always appeared at the time ; it has been felt, hence believed, to be desirable because it was desired. But it has not necessarily been *good* in the sense of leaving a balance of good, of permanently desirable, results. Not necessarily *good* when, the urgency of passion once over, the cost of that sacrifice comes to be deducted from the value of what it has bought. Not necessarily *good* when what is obtained by the victory comes to be weighed against what was lost by the war. A good cause becomes less good, by whatever of good it sacrifices to itself. A supreme aim (if such a thing can exist), would needs be one which contains or reconciles all lesser aims. For there is one of the essential characteristics of all Reality, wherein it differs entirely from Passionate Delusion, namely, that while the latter looks only to the credit side, Reality keeps its implacably accurate accounts by double entry.

It will be objected that Principles, Ideals, Causes, Beliefs, Feelings, Passions and Ways of Seeing, are themselves realities, indeed among the most potent realities, as this war has surely shown. Of course. Were it otherwise I should not be pointing out some of the losses, themselves, alas, only too real, which these intangible Realities are capable of inflicting whenever really installed in real men's minds, moreover employing real hands and real weapons, let alone real tongues and real falsehoods. And since my chief plea against this war is its being an outrage on Reality, and one for which Reality will exact retribution—I must forestall some of the notes on my Play so far as to explain what it is I am talking about.

When a minute ago I spoke of Realities, I ought to have added the adjective *other*. That is the peculiarity, frequently troublesome, of Reality : that it always has *other* sides ; the sides you do not happen to see or think of ; the sides which don't interest you at this moment ; the sides which happen not to be in any manner, yourself. Since feeling is always *here*,

which means in the speaker, and *now*, which means the moment of speaking; for short of that it is merely the feeling you recollect yourself to have had, the feeling you suppose to be in some other person or in a future yourself; it is memory, inference, not feeling as such. But Reality is not merely *here* and *now*. It stretches out in space and in time. It unrolls in several dimensions; you walk out of one part thereof into another; you come in contact, agreeable or disagreeable, with a number of its sides which cannot be taken in all at once. Reality requires successive and various orientations and focuses, requires the telescope and also the microscope; it is bigger and smaller than your powers of sight; it is above and below; it is before and also after. You are a part of it, but a part never two seconds in contact (bodily or mental as the case may be) with the same other parts. You are not even a stable pattern of the same parts of yourself, but, like a kaleidoscope, you drop into all manner of combinations at the impact of the variously-changing combinations of everything else. What you see and feel is merely a fragment and a phase of Reality; what you speak of and define an even lesser part. That is why habits and preferences, delusions which, inasmuch as born of our needs, have something so much more natural and cogent about them, are notwithstanding, in the long run, so much less important than realities, indeed take half of their importance from the way they have of bringing us into unprofitable or harmful relations with other Realities. Such is confessedly the case with the delusions arising from the passions themselves due to conflict between private individuals; how much more when the delusions are the averaged, standardized, the unanimous ones born of the passionate conflict of whole nations! Neither need they be, nor are they, delusions all through; they may contain a share of truth; and that gives them but the greater hold on our credulity. Even as there is mostly some starting point in real visual phenomena for whatever is called an *optical*

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illusion, so also in the delusions of passion there is often an element of reality ; sometimes, as in what is called *prejudice*, an element borrowed from a distant past or from an unconnected namesake, as when Poles or Rumanians identify the Jews who crucified our Lord with the Jews whose shops they are looting.

But the most disconcerting business about Reality, and what causes us to collide with it is (I must reiterate this point) that it has so many sides and so rarely goes on presenting the same side, surface or angle to us. Whence our frequent knocking of heads, hurling ourselves into the void, or embracing, Ixion-like, clouds in lieu of goddesses.

And now to return to the warring nations. Even more than individuals, nations have many sides, too many for us to see, especially to *feel* (for they affect our feelings differently), at the same moment ; too many sides for us to check off against one another, so much to the debit side, so much to the credit, and so much as balance. Being at war makes all nations turn inwards, towards their own members and partisans, those sides which are admirable, pathetic or at least sympathetic ; while facing the enemy countries with only brutality, graspingness and double-dealing. So, during an air-raid, whether on London or the Rhineland, the towns-folk awaiting the bomb which may turn them into a mush of torn flesh and broken brickwork, could view the threatening airman, German in the one case, Entente in the other, only as an atrocious monster. And correctly. No less that airman's comrades, as they watched him soaring through the barrage fire, or hurled, broken but victorious, to the earth, could see in that same airman only a hero. What from below is murder and devastation, becomes, from above, and in that flyer's own intention, nothing but gallant defence of self and country. Both sides of that reality exist ; both views, so far as they go, are true. Only both sides cannot be viewed, cannot be felt, at once ; and, for that reason, are faulty and

misleading. Let me emphasize that they cannot be seen because they cannot be felt. It is our feelings which, rendering us sensitive to only such happenings as concern them, make an automatic choice among the potential experiences offered to us, engraving some upon our mind ; rejecting or distorting all the rest ; until, whenever effort, and therefore feeling, are strong, the mind presents rather the chart of its own emotions than the image of the surrounding world. Thus with the massacre of the innocents which war has perpetrated : the drowning of those few poor children on the *Lusitania* has stamped itself on the pitying and indignant Anglo-Saxon soul ; while our blockade's slow, steady killing of scores of Central European children, born and unborn, has barely caught the tail of our eye : has indeed been so little noticed as almost to constitute an *alibi* for our collective conscience. Moreover, as we cannot compare the seen with the unseen, still less weigh what is felt against what is not felt, there comes to be not only wholesale ignorance of one half of the realities, but a consequent lack of comparison, a loss of all sense of scale and proportion. Thus there has not been among either group of belligerents, with the perhaps solitary exception of Mr. Bernard Shaw, any attempt to estimate the special horrors inflicted on invaded or besieged populations as against the general, universal horrors incident to war itself. Indeed, by an irony unperceivable in war-time, the enemy's "atrocities" have been urged as a reason for protracting the atrocious doings described, for instance by Barbusse in *Le Feu*,\* and which, just because part and parcel of legitimate military operations, were far more extensive, continuous and thorough-going than any illegally perpetrated horrors. Wishing to justify its own participation in such things, each nation has been obliged to condemn the enemy

\* Also in *Clarke*. These horrors are not merely those endured by combatants ; they are those also of the civil populations whose homes become the battlefield.

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and absolve the war, or else add the war to that enemy's sole account.

In such manner do war-efforts and war-passions make us see only one side of realities, and see that in wrong proportions and erroneous connexions : the proportions which things bear to our feelings not to one another ; the connexions with our hopes, fears, sufferings and struggles, not with whatever has preceded, determined, those things, and whatever they in their turn will produce or determine. Above all, thus does the urgency of self-defence and self-justification foreshorten the relations between aims and means, making the aims bulk clear and huge, the means lose all intrinsic importance ; the aim being victory, the means being massacre, devastation, starvation and bankruptcy. Now these things, which we are thus treating merely as means, have an equally intrinsic existence in Reality ; and however much we may overlook whatever does not appeal to us as a means to our ends, these disregarded sides continue none the less to act and set up reaction. We think of the *Fruits of Victory* ; granted that they exist, and they do exist at least as pleasures of vainglory and vindictiveness ; yet they are only one half of the Reality. The other half are the *Fruits of Defeat* ; and these scatter seed of new wars into the future.

But at such moments we do not think of the other side of Reality. For, odd as it may sound, the enemy is not that other side. He is, *qua* enemy, part of our view ; at most, like that raiding airman, one side of reality. The other side of the peoples with whom we have been struggling is precisely whatever, from our side, was not to be seen or felt. The other side of the Germans and Austrians was what did not constitute them the enemy ; on the contrary, facing towards themselves, it constituted the friend, the comrade, the beloved and threatened father-land. Odder still, the other side of those people was similar to just that side of ourselves which we felt as the only one existing : the side made up of virtue,

heroism, aspirations, sufferings, of everything inspiring love and self-sacrifice.

In this way war comes to be an outrage on the Reality of Things. By its initial act of uniting all the naturally incompatible interests (honesty with knavery, wisdom with folly) of one country in aggressive self-defence against another country, and similarly of excluding all the interests and compatibilities existing with the other country, it cuts that Reality in two, hiding one half thereof ; and so abolishes in our thoughts Reality's most essential characteristic, which is that it has no sides, has no divisions, is but one ceaselessly moving, inextricably interacting mass, in whose perpetual inner and outer change every portion impinges on another portion, but never on quite the same ; transmitting its motion to another and receiving motion from another in return ; the West prolonging itself into the East, the future rolling back into the present, the present into the past ; separations existing only for our feelings. Our feelings themselves are but a minute portion, the most unstable and dependent portion of this universal and ceaseless change and interchange, in which we have our being. And our existence, let alone the satisfaction of those very needs and passions which often distort and always restrict our vision of reality, depends upon the lucid recognition or the intuitive, inherited acceptance of this surrounding otherness ; upon our respect for what we may not see and still less feel, but know to be existing : the *not here* and the *not now* whose claims will, sooner or later, be brought home to our short-sightedness and egoism. Therefore it is not merely by its destruction of so many lives, of so vast a portion of the wealth required for living, that war—at least a modern war like this one—is an outrage upon life. But rather because war means a hypertrophy of the present and the near-at-hand, leaving in our mind no room for a different past and a different future, for a previous and subsequent, a different self. And such diminution of the field

of Reality, comparable with the narrowed vision of him who aims at a target, means a proportionate diminution of what will be our life.

Put practically : to-morrow we shall no longer be fighting, or shall be fighting someone else. We shall be needing more food, shelter and clothing, more of such work as can be exchanged for them, hence we must buy and sell. We shall be needing more science and art and social reform; hence we must read and converse and look and listen, wherever there is anything to learn or see. In fact, and all the more for this war's impoverishment and loss of time, we shall require a more active intercourse and barter with all the working, trading and thinking world, of which our recent adversaries are one large half. Such vital exchanges between nations cannot be based (any more than the vital exchanges of our bodies upon poisons) upon the bad, the destructive sides of those peoples which war had turned towards us. Even less upon the bad, the destructive sides of ourselves which war had turned towards them. We must seek, and we must show, the other sides of both. We must reinstate in our thoughts the other aspects of Reality and recognize once more its inextricable intermeshings and its ceaseless give-and-take.

## VII

### *“ Honour dishonourable.”*

In the preceding chapter I have touched upon the question of Aims versus Means, and the utter disproportion between them in our eyes. We see, we feel, our aims with steady intensity because they are part of ourselves, because they are our desire and our effort. We seek our means in what is not ourselves, and therefore interests us only with reference to us. Hence we do not always see or foresee the train of what I call *otherness*, other circumstances, other results and concomitants, which comes uninvited along with the small portion of Reality

wanted for our uses. Put otherwise, every purpose of ours is a loophole through which we get a squint at Reality ; but every action is a door by which we issue into it, and, at the same time, willy-nilly, allow Reality to enter and take contact with us. The wider, the less often opened that door, the greater, the more unexpected, the throng, the flood which once let in surrounds, and maybe, submerges, us. Now the vastest gate which a handful of men have ever, at any single moment within record, thrown open upon the unintended, unexpected, the incalculable otherness of things, has been this war. The magnitude of the calamity reduces all discussion of those men's several responsibilities to mere vindictive or self-justifying childishness. Men's responsibilities do not go beyond their intentions, nor their intentions beyond their habits and powers of thought. That these particular men did whatever they did (and whatever they did was only the last link in the chain of action and reaction), proves that they did not intend or know what they were doing. Therefore in such a context the words *guilty* or *innocent* mean only how long or short a time any of these elderly persons will be permitted to survive a mock-trial by his enemies ; or else how well or ill each of them shall sleep, thanks to the verdict of his own accommodating or uneasy conscience. But to posterity our present talk about the responsibilities for this war and for its *sequela* will afford no interest save as added proof of the inadequacy of our intellectual and moral habits to cope with the vastness and intricacy of the many-dimensional Reality whereof applied science has placed the switch in our ignorant and thoughtless hands. The lopsidedness of view, the lack of comparison and sense of proportion in judgments, we all know in quarrels between individual men, are brought to the highest point by that national unanimity which we have seen to be one of war's most inevitable results and most indispensable instruments.

In the case of present war this inherent inadequacy to

estimate, and in so far deal with, realities, has been made even more lamentable by a disproportion which was already existing in peace time, but has, of course, been intensified by war. I am alluding to the disproportion between the material powers recently placed in our hands by what is called (and the adjective is characteristic of our mentality), applied science on the one hand, and on the other, the intellectual and moral notions handed down, without sufficient revision or renewal, from ages either very remote, or at all events very different from our own : a disproportion sometimes as great as between the Big Bertha which bombarded Paris from another province of France and the stones hurled against a fortress by a mediæval catapult ; nay, in some cases the sling and pebbles of David. Such disproportion between our mechanical powers and our spiritual habits is so much the dominant characteristic of our civilization and of ourselves, that we rarely suspect its very existence. Whatever has survived from hundreds, perhaps thousands, of years ago, seems as natural, and a great deal less astonishing than do the labour-multiplying, the time-and-space-overcoming mechanisms which change from moment to moment even while we employ them. The intellectual and moral standards in daily use, for instance our notion of what constitutes evidence and of what constitutes duty, have undergone no such renovation, if only because while new machinery has added power to that already possessed by the privileged few, new conceptions of true and false, of right and wrong, would as certainly diminish the privileges of our *Beati Possidentes*. But in the eyes of Posterity the attempted solution of the world's national and economic problems by the application of military force ; nay, the bare survival of military institutions, let alone the identification of military victory with justice or expediency, will be sufficient proof of the utter lopsidedness of latter-day human development. Of such grotesque and tragic disproportion between our material progress and our intellectual and moral

backwardness, there will, however, remain an even grosser, though to us in whom it is embodied an even less obvious, record. That proof consists in the circumstance that, in the days of telephones, of marconigrams and of the miraculous celerity of our printing press, it has been possible for the mutual engagements of a dozen officials, living or deceased, for treaties sometimes virtually forgotten (what percentage of educated English people remembered in 1914 the guarantees given to Belgium more than half a century before ?), treaties mostly secret and always undiscussed in public, to be not only claimed, but accepted, as debts of honour payable at the expense of millions of lives and milliards of wealth ; moreover over-riding in their pettifogging protocols, the preferences, the vital needs, of vanquished populations. Such has remained our notion of honour as between peoples : the honour of mediæval despots sending out serfs to do battle for their family compacts and genealogical claims ; the honour of primitive raiders dividing up the flocks and herds and human chattels acquired by successful massacre and ambush.

## VIII

These, it seems to me, are some of the spiritual aspects of the war, such as could not be perceived by those, whether friends or foes, whose heart has been in it. I have symbolized them in my play: Satan, who defines himself as the *Waster of Human Virtue*, stages his latest, though perhaps not his last, Dance of Death with the stealthy assistance of his irresponsible bravoes Delusion and Confusion, no less than with the visible and audible co-operation of the loftiest and the vilest of our Passions, all playing away, cheek-by jowl, in the orchestra of Patriotism, their strains reinforced, just when beginning to flag, by the timely advent of Pity and Indignation ; until Ballet Master Death, weary though exultant,

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refreshes himself with drunken slumber propped upon his faithful adorer, the beautiful blind boy Heroism.

And it is this view of the war, disregarding as it does all the vindictive and self-righteous distinctions made in each conflicting camp ; nay, uniting the hostile peoples into a con-substantial mankind identical in nobility and in folly, in readiness to endure and to inflict suffering and ruin ; it is this view of an onlooker who condemns not any of the combatants but only the war itself, which is bound to make my allegory distasteful to the majority of readers in all countries equally.

Like the play itself and the notes to it, this preface would have been mere egoistic irrelevance had it been written in justification of that aloof attitude of mine, which has been of interest, and will soon cease to be so, only to a few puzzled and forgiving friends. The whole thing was, however, worth writing ; and is, I naturally think, worth reading, because, inasmuch as displaying and analysing the mental and moral habits resulting from being *in*, it draws attention to the habits of feeling and thought which are preventing our *being out* of the war. For they are the self-same. And the failure to recognize that the settlement we have just been celebrating makes peace a mockery in the present and an impossibility in the future, is, no less than the actual terms enforced on the vanquished, a proof of the continuance of war's passions and delusions, an unheeded sign that the real victory achieved has been of the spirit of war over the spirit of peace.

This is indeed beginning to be admitted, but only as if it were an unlucky accident, by the self-satisfied sentimentalists of the race of Bernard Shaw's immortal Broadbent, who had sincerely believed that if only a sufficient number of sufficiently good angels stood over Satan and his company, the *Ballet of the Nations* might be kept within desirable bounds, made into a dance such as takes place in Passion Week on Spanish altar-steps, terrible no doubt, and tragic, but decent, edifying, nay sacramentally purifying alike to devout performers and

on one's own behaviour, yet one's own behaviour happens, after all, to be the only factor of the future which oneself can contribute.

Sooner or later, and the sooner the better, we shall have to recognize that the war-passions have set us all at loggerheads, not with each other only, but with the Reality of Things whereof we are all, nations as well as individuals, so small, so ephemeral, so utterly dependent and inter-dependent a portion. To seek out the responsibilities of our recent adversary and evade our own, is flying in the face of this Reality whose unbroken continuity admits of no undivided, no unreciprocated responsibilities even for trifling, momentary mishaps ; how much less for vast, long-prepared and universally radiating calamities. By one of Reality's processes of endless give-and-take, we cannot chastise the cruelties and injustice committed by others without committing cruelty and injustice ourselves, which, in their turn, will clamour for chastisement ; an endless, atrocious and most absurd sequence of vendettas. We do not want our lives and our children's lives to go round and round in such a circle of preposterous tragedies. Now there is only one way of breaking through it : we must re-admit that which our war-actions and war-passions have excluded. Not merely the former enemy to our commerce and councils ; but also, which will result from such a re-admission, that former enemy's fine, useful, nay, irreplaceable sides, which war had turned away or veiled from our sight. Neither those only, which are that people's (for every people has such), special good qualities different from and complementary to, our good ones, the distinctive produce of each climate and history, necessary to fertilize and purify that of other countries. But no less must we re-admit the good qualities which that recent enemy has in common with ourselves: the wisdom and virtue, the beneficent energy, belonging to mankind as a whole, and of which any one group of men, like any individual man or woman, however wonderful, cannot

produce enough for its own sustenance and growth, for the neutralizing of that error and evil itself, like all others, tends also to produce. Experience, and alas ! probably the cruel experience of omission and commission, will have to teach this to the nations, lest they dance for ever in Satan's ballets.

And this brings me to the chief moral of this war-play of mine, both of which will doubtless strike some readers as what they call immoral. The thesis summed up in my allegory and brought home to me by the war's prodigious waste of human virtue, is that the world needs rather than such altruism as is expressed in self-sacrifice, a different kind of altruism which is recognition of the other (for *alter* is Latin for *other*), sides, aspects, possibilities and requirements of things and people. That humble, but, alas, by no means always common, altruism is at the bottom of such barter of good for better as is abhorrent to Satan the Waster. In this preface I have incidentally summarized the two first parts, the Prologue in Hell and the Dance of Death on earth, of my allegoric trilogy of the war. Events have now (August, 1919), got to the Epilogue. In my symbolic interpretation thereof, Heroism, waked up by Ballet Master Death's intoxicated boastings, and called upon to help him to his legs, becomes aware that his former idolized leader is but an aged and very putrescent scarecrow ; whereupon, laying blindly (since Heroism is still blind) about him he nearly makes an end of that particular offspring of the Great Waster. The latter however, I mean Satan, having examined his son and ballet master's injuries, expresses the hope that a decent modern disguise (perhaps as one of those idealistic guardian angels who rush in nowadays wherever fools have not feared to tread) may make him pass muster yet awhile ; and adds that the serious danger to the prospects of his *Ballet of the Nations* lies in Heroism's being cured at last of his congenital blindness. Which, being interpreted, means mankind's recognizing that the adversary against which it spends itself is its own re-

flected image, or, when more tangible, its own tortured substance.

## X

' Not so long ago I still imagined that it was in the power, as among the duties, of a writer to teach new ways of wisdom and train the docile generations to pursue them. Thanks largely to the lessons of the war, I have come to think otherwise about us writers. Though we do not recognize it as yet, continuing to seat ourselves in the chancel-stalls and procession gravely in the cast-off vestments of priests, prophets and augurs, the use of us, if any, is different. The ideas we take one from the other and hand on in an endless chain of contradiction or complementary, black coming after white and green following on over much red—all these ideas, or rather our always excessive individual presentation of them, are what serves to elicit and keep up the flow of thought in mankind. And that is the really important business. Since in whatever falls under the heading "philosophy of life," the generations require to think out their problems rather than be furnished with ready-made conclusions, often coming to grief when they are hustled into action before having been familiar with a question's aspects and alternatives. As in the matter of going or not going to war. It is not the views of this writer or that which will really alter anything, unless indeed, which is oftenest the case, those views of his tally with, reinforce, perhaps slightly forestalling, the tendencies of thought of his readers. This comes to saying that we really are, rather than teachers, expressers, making our readers' latent thoughts manifest to themselves, sometimes even with the effect of their starting away from them in terror or laughter.

I have not, therefore, the smallest hope of teaching the younger generation what I have compared, presumptuously, no doubt, with the Copernican system as distinguished from

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that which made the sun and stars turn obsequiously round the earth ; or put otherwise, the altruism which is respect for the other rather than renunciation of the self ; indeed any of the various truths which I imagine myself to have set forth in the present volume.

What I do hope (it may well be without sufficient warrant) is that some of these notions are the needful complementaries and correctives of what has gone before, and, as such, implicit in the younger generation's thinking. Even in the years immediately before the war there seemed to be gathering, as a consequence of wider scientific interests, a reaction against the fashions of thought—pragmatism of William James, vitalism of Bergson, obscurantism of the Modernists ; likewise against that tendency *à la* Nietzsche, but also (derived from Renan) *à la* Sorel the Syndicalist, to make life minister to æsthetic desire for dramatic or “distinguished” posturing, and for crimson and azure backgrounds ; all of which *modes* (in the French sense also !) were themselves, like their accompanying nationalism and imperialism, only so much reaction against the crude though insufficient lucidity of the days of Mill, Spencer and Taine. Some such change towards a more sceptical, less self-sufficient rationalism, did seem to be coming. And had it set in already in full force, it is conceivable that this war would never have taken place. But the war having taken place, indeed taken the place of everything else, I seem to guess that the younger generation—or what remains alive thereof !—whose immature thought and self were overwhelmed by the war-passions, dragged (pied-piper wise) by Idealism's silver trumpetings and Heroism's monotonous drumming, moreover bereft of reason by the fiery hissings and cruel sobs of Indignation and Pity, will now have been brought to intellectual maturity, to sober self-questioning, by the war itself.

The unexampled magnitude of the war's sacrifice, the paltry, where not abhorrent, reward for that sacrifice, will

have jolted into activity even those powers of thinking which might have remained dormant short of such convulsions. Intelligent people would really have been hopelessly stupid if this were not the case !

I therefore venture to think that the young generation, the generation separated by an intervening (and obscurantist and imperialist) one from my own superannuated self, may, while counting the losses and patching up the fragments among the ruins of our world, see their thoughts turn more and more round one idea : *Waste* ; how it comes about, how it may be minimized.

It is for them, as well as for my solitary self, that I have set up my allegoric puppet-show and pulled the strings of my archangelic marionette labelled *Satan, the Waster of Human Virtue*.

ADEL, NEAR LEEDS.

*August, MCMXIX.*

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PART I  
. PROLOGUE IN HELL

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DEDICATED TO  
G. F. NICOLAI  
AUTHOR OF "DIE BIOLOGIE DES KRIEGES"  
AND TO  
RUDOLF GOLDSCHEID  
AUTHOR OF "MENSCHENÖKONOMIE"



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## PROLOGUE

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“And out of good still to find means of evil.”—Milton.

*Hell: a vague remaining corner of the Primæval Darkness. SATAN alone. His figure becomes gradually visible, outlined against the blank blackness by the dim grey light which emanates from it, or more properly, of which it consists. He is seated at one end of a long Empire sofa, very much in the pose of one of Michelangelo’s Medici Dukes, resting one arm on his knee and his chin on his hand, deep in weary and mysterious meditation.*

*A brief silence, during which SATAN’s figure becomes, while remaining dim and disembodied, a little more visible, showing that he is dressed very much like that Michelangelo statue. Shadowy wings seem folded behind him. Knocking is heard, and a strange bark as of several wolves, three different notes making a kind of chord.*

SATAN. Another bore ! This endless interviewing of silly human Passions is enough to spoil the pleasure of my great coming performance, my Ballet of the Nations. . . . I thought I had given instructions to all my personnel, and might enjoy a half hour of solitude and silence, for Satan though lonely, is never let alone. Well ! Let Cerberus detain them at my doors.

*The barking approaches, and with it is at length heard the voice, a fine rolling contralto, of CLIO, Muse of History.*

THE MUSE. Down, Cerberus, down—good dog, good little dog. It's only its old friend Clio, who has brought it a nice little sop of honey-lies.

SATAN. The Muse of History ! I had quite forgotten our appointment. There she is, irreclaimably classic and never forgetting her plastic poses ; indiscreet beyond all other Immortals, and of course, an hour before her time ! Still, my performance needs her reporting. And although she is a fool of the first water, she has rubbed shoulders in her professional capacity with so many celebrated persons that she may pass muster as intelligent. Since she has cost me my brief moment of privacy, let me amuse myself a little by mystifying her.

*The barking has ceased. Enter the MUSE, with the marble impetuosity of the Victory of Samothrace, and very angry in an operatic way. She does not recognize SATAN in the dark.*

THE MUSE. Insolence I call it ! I tell you I am invited to attend your Master ; and you shall answer to him, whoever you are, for having kept me waiting out there with Cerberus ! Hullo, you there in the dark, tell my Lord Satan that Clio waits upon him : Clio, Muse of History, not to be mistaken for that newfangled impostor who makes free with my name to retail vulgar details about laws and institutions and the price of food stuffs ; Clio, real Muse of real History, sister of Tragedy and the Impassioned Lyric, and dealing only with deeds heroic, elevating and most often destructive.

SATAN. All right, all right, don't be flustered. No one would ever mistake you for anything scientific, my dear Clio.

THE MUSE (*taken aback*). The voice of Satan himself ! (*she curtsies in several directions in the dark*) Forgive me, Prince of Darkness. Your kingdom seems even less well-lit than usual, after the garish modern world. I thought I had to

do with some attendant fiend new to the service ; why even Cerberus himself scarcely knew my voice.

SATAN (*has risen and shakes hands*). A thousand apologies, dearest Muse. The fires of Hell have long since been extinguished, for no one took them seriously in these godless days. Your perspicacious eyes will grow more accustomed to this dear primæval darkness ; and after my coming Ballet, the lights of Earth will no longer offend you : even there gloom and a touch of chaos will prevail.

But come, let us have a look at each other, my excellent old friend !

SATAN *increases the ominous light which emanates from his person, and is revealed like a tempestuous moon thinly veiled in clouds : beautiful, archangelic, without age or sex, all powerful, omniscient, sad, but with much sense of humour.*

SATAN (*pointing to the other corner of the Empire sofa*). Come, sit opposite where I can look at you, dear old Clio ! I am glad to see you quite unchanged ! Classic, even to the invariable key pattern on your hem ! The same majestic embonpoint, like some ample-bosomed *prima donna* in a Wagner opera, but with the incomparable contralto, luscious but rolling, suitable to Handel ! And not aged a bit !

THE MUSE. You are too good, my Lord ; and your ancient friendship does not see the ravages of time in my poor wrinkled face. (*CLIO takes out a powder puff and applies it with a frank and delicate grace*.) But as to you, my Lord ! Satan of all creative and created forces alone maintains unblemished youth.

SATAN *shakes his head.*

THE MUSE (*anxious to make herself agreeable after the gaffe committed on entering, looks round her for something to say*). How truly restful is not this ancient place ! The ideal retreat,

I always say, for one uniting in his person, action, thought and fancy.

SATAN (*bows, one hand on his heart*). A good old place ! The only bit still left of the deep Void and Darkness whence Life and Light arose to plague me and be plagued by me ! You know it well of old ! But such are the regrettable compromises with error to which professional men of letters, and even muses, are obliged, that you yourself, I notice, have more than once described this house of quiet brooding evil as peopled with the myriad damned who encumber the world above with their dead carcasses and equally offensive living souls. To think that poets and divines have packed these restful solitudes with brimstone flames, bogs of boiling mud, lakes of ice, viewless winds, all crammed with garrulous deceased humans ! Little did I guess, when I made all moralists vindictive, that, not being satisfied with what Satan makes of Earth, this vindictiveness would intrude feeble copies thereof into his own dwelling, whence he sends evil to suffer and avenge itself above.

THE MUSE. Too true, alas ! my Lord. The literary trade is frequently obliged to make truth acceptable by standing it on its head ; for instance, put what people call Hell *below*, when it is so visibly *above*, the Earth's surface ; time it *after* death, when it is obviously present during life. But misrepresentations of this trifling kind are crumpled rose-leaves in the Arch-fiend's bed. And . . . forgive the indiscretion of so old a friendship, you seem a little depressed to-day. Anything gone wrong ?

SATAN. Oh no ! Everything as it should be : evil hatching everywhere ; and in another hour, triumphant through one half of Earth. I am only bored. But that is not unusual with me.

THE MUSE. Bored, my dear Lord Satan ! Why you have

invited me to report the very greatest performance you have ever staged !

SATAN. Yes ; I truly think the finest. By the way, did you pass on my invitation to the Ages-to-Come ?

THE MUSE: I have, my Lord. They will be here in good time.

SATAN. That's right. They shall have front stalls ; for they are more appreciative than the Virtues of our audience, who always fall asleep when the performance offends their principles. But as to you, *your seat is next to mine, as beseems the great recording Muse.*

THE MUSE (*claps her hands in delight*). Oh, dear Lord Satan !

SATAN. We are very old friends, Clio. What would history have to record but for the doings of Satan ? And save for your varied talents, what memory would there be for evil deeds ? But come, let us have a little chat, dear old Muse. There is still half an hour till the bell rings and we go aloft. Except your disembodied friends the Ages-to-Come, no one will have admittance here below. Some of the Virtues would doubtless enjoy seeing my quiet home, but its thin dehumanized atmosphere makes them cough. And as to our Orchestra of Human Passions, they are always in training ; and it is the Ballet Master's duty to summon them in time. All else is ready. I need scarce remind you that the real preparation for this new Ballet of mine began long ages back ; one might almost say with the first wars which, making men afraid, taught them to bring on aggression by their precautions for self defence. So that the necessary pretexts and arguments for hatred have, like the painted scenery of an earthly play-house, accumulated on my hands from age to age, ready to shift from side to side. Thus in the coming Ballet you will recognize, not without amusement, the selfsame insults against Britain's whilom comrades-in-arms which Burke and Pitt had used against

Britain's present-day allies, the once frog-eating, systematic murderers called French. And now the scene shifters of the Press and Cabinet are busy above ; listen ! you can just hear their hammering. And the armament-mongers have sent in all their latest millinery.

THE MUSE. And how is Ballet Master Death, your gifted son ?

SATAN. My *nephew*, if you don't mind, dear Clio. Prejudice is sacred in my eyes, and I should hate to be a cause of scandal to my weaker brethren. You ask how is Ballet Master Death ? Oh well ! we all grow old, and he never had a good constitution to begin with. And then perpetual worry ! All those doctors and social reformers spoiling his sport and almost throwing him back on mere telluric horrors, shipwrecks and earthquakes and such like.

THE MUSE. Yes, indeed ! We have had a dull time of it, and a difficult one, in that bourgeois Victorian Age, with people talking of Peace, Retrenchment and Reform, and even practising them a little. But this new century has brought back a nobler and more ideal way of thinking. Mankind is getting once more to recognize that man cannot live by bread alone.

SATAN. Just so. His moral digestion is apt to become torpid from protracted peace and plenty. Then man requires the heroic remedies of primitive medicine : Vitalizing Lies, Alcoholic Syrup of Catchwords wherein to swallow such *materia medica* as moderns blush to mention ; fastings and blood-lettings ; drastic purges, as Aristotle prescribed, by terror and pity ; and such upsetting of the whole circulation as spiritual dervishes and flagellants employ in order to restore the zest of life.—Forgive my coarseness, dear Muse of History ! It is no longer every day I can converse with refined intellectuals like you. Philosophers and Poets do, of course, join enthusiastically in my shows when, as in the coming Ballet,

the Orchestra of Patriotism is engaged. But at other moments, my work lies more and more with Prejudice and Dullness. If boredom were not part of Satan's doom, I sometimes think I should die of it, dear Muse !

THE MUSE. (*in her finest manner*). Boredom is surely the nemesis of all great eminence in this mediocre universe.

SATAN. No, most amiable of sycophants; Satan is always bored, not through excess of greatness, but for a different reason.

THE MUSE. A different reason ! Indeed ! Is it presuming on your friendly condescension and the intense interest which History has always taken in what pertains to evil, is it indiscreet to ask what kind of reason ?

SATAN. "Satan's table talk by one who knows him"—eh ? Don't deny it, Clio, you see yourself already as my Boswell !

THE MUSE (*modest, but intensely delighted*). Oh, my Lord, my ambition never soared—

SATAN. Why not ? Milton and Goethe and thousands of divines and moralists have published so many spurious accounts of me, that I might as well, once in a way, give the world a little correct information about my humble self. To do so with your help will serve to while away the half-hour still remaining until the curtain rises on my new Ballet. So let us talk, dear Clio. Are you comfortably seated ? (*SATAN shoves a footstool beneath the Muse's feet.*)

THE MUSE. Always so thoughtful for his friends, our dear Lord Satan !

SATAN. Well, then: Satan is bored because he never feels love.

THE MUSE. The world at large, not having the advantage of such delightful experiences as mine, has indeed always taxed your Lordship with—shall we say ? a trifling lack of lovingkindness.

SATAN. And correctly. That, however, is not my meaning. There are other kinds of love than lovingkindness, Clio, although the self-righteousness of loveless moralists has talked as if that—love of your neighbour, country, enemy, love of the poor by those who are well off, were the only kind of love. . . .

THE MUSE (*archly*). *We* are not moralists, my Lord, but men and women of the world !

SATAN. Oh, that is not what I am driving at. No allusion to the Daughters of Men whom the Sons of God found fair ; and such like gossip. The notion that real love must be illicit, or at all events such as virtuous persons hide away in modest alcoves, is merely the inverted prudery of silly moderns. Love does comprise all that, whether preached from the pulpit or whispered with a wink, but love is something larger and transcends human relations, though it takes its name from them. Love not merely of creatures, but of anything else : places, employments, aspects, ideas and aims ; love which means attraction, attachment, preference, the power of delighting in whatever it may be : the mother's delight in her children, the thinker's in his problems, the poet's and the child's in the bare sense and spectacle of life, the plain man's in all his plans and prospects. *That* is love, love in the widest sense. And that is denied me. You noticed I was bored. The secret of that eternal boredom lies in this: Satan, my dear old interviewer, though in all else omnipotent, is impotent on one point. He cannot take delight.

*A pause. The MUSE does not know what she ought to say.*

SATAN. Satan cannot love, anyone or anything. Satan's only manner of possessing (but he has fashioned half mankind in his own jealous image), is to deny delight or use to others. For him the sense of power comes not in making, understanding, or loving, but only in spoiling. Shall I tell you what I am ?

THE MUSE. I should esteem it a great favour, and of

inestimable advantage to my future work, if you would, my Lord.

SATAN. Then listen, Clio: *I am the Power that Wastes.* Being unable to use, I render useless; taking no pleasure in fruition, I smite with barrenness. And the more precious, rare and sorely needed, the more I waste whatever it may be: earth and time's opportunities of joy and betterment; man's life, man's labour and man's thought. But most of all, man's goodness. So that Satan's truest name might be: the Waster of Human Virtue.

THE MUSE. How deeply interesting! I trust it may not be presuming too much on your kindness, to ask your Lordship for an instance or two in illustration of the above remarks?

SATAN. Willingly. And since you are a Muse, wearing a key-pattern, genuine classic, on your frock, you shall have an instance from Homer. You must correct me if my memory plays tricks with the quotation. It is Achilles speaking: "Farewell, Patroclus, even in the house of Hades. I am now doing all that I have promised thee. Twelve sons of noble Trojans shall the flames consume along with thee. But dogs, not fire, shall devour the flesh of Hector, son of Priam."\*

THE MUSE. I don't quite grasp your illustration, dear Lord Satan. That was *cruelty*, the wolf not quite purged away out of primitive man. Nothing was being *wasted*?

SATAN. Do wolves butcher prey which they cannot eat, in order to avenge some dear dead wolf? No. Such virtue is human.

THE MUSE. Virtue, my Lord?

SATAN. Surely. Loyalty to the dead; one of the virtues I greatly enjoy spoiling; and a virtue which, far from being purged away from modern man, is about to furnish me some sublime effects. . . . But I will not forestall my Ballet.

\* *Iliad*, xxiii, kindly translated for me by Mr. Desmond MacCarthy.

Except to tell you that one of its main themes, its *Leit-Motivs*, as Wagnerians say, is my dealing with just such virtue : the sweet and ardent loyalty of noble lads, ready to die themselves and kill other noble lads, lest dear comrades should have died in vain ; loyalty also which makes the bereaved mother send her last son that his dead elder brothers may not feel forsaken. That is virtue, you will not deny. And of such sacred, and much-needed virtue, I will make a vice.

THE MUSE (*impressed, but not quite sure whether she has really understood*). A very original and dramatic notion, to be sure, my Lord !

SATAN. And this leads me to correct what I told you just now. Did I say I took delight in nothing ? That requires revision. I love sacrifice.

THE MUSE. You are a god and all gods share that taste.

SATAN. My sacrifices are genuine, and wholesale ; not wretched little cakes, or grains of incense, or the inferior cuts of sacrificial beasts ; nor hearts uplifted in momentary fervour ; mere tiny tithes of what mankind produces for its own use and pleasure. My sacrifices leave nothing behind them ; unlike all other gods, I claim the whole ; and I consume it all. The furnaces of Moloch smoked for me. . . . (*the Muse is a little taken aback at SATAN's sudden emphasis of manner, and doubtful whether it is in perfect taste*).

THE MUSE. I am aware of that. Indeed I might make bold to point out to your Lordship that the Muse of History can really be trusted to know such facts.

SATAN. The facts, but not the meaning.

THE MUSE ( *nettled*). You are unfair, my Lord ! Even Milton, though only a poet, was taught by me that every superstition, save his own—his list was just a trifle sectarian —had been invented by your Lordship.

SATAN. But neither your Christian Milton, nor your

classic self, seems to have guessed that it is not the obscene rituals of Baal and Belial, nor the frenzy of mad fanaticism and monastic rule, which brought the offerings most savoury to my nostrils. Not Iphigenia, her white throat cut like a garlanded heifer's to procure a wind; not Jephthah's daughter, bewailing her unwedded girlhood, have been the most spotless victims immolated on my altars. Not even the glorious army of martyrs palmed and golden stoled whose blood—oh rosy blood of virgins and of little children!—was lapped up by my avenging Hounds of Persecution, making them ravenous for more martyred flesh; not the countless multitude of uncanonized saints who, killing self, breed selfishness in others; not the myriad heroes (reckon them up ever since wars began!) who died for doubtful causes or no cause at all. I have received higher oblations; Lambs more Unblemished have bled for me. For all true sacrifice is sacrifice to Satan.

THE MUSE. You are eloquent, my Lord. But, as so often happens nowadays with literary genius, you overstate your case and damage it by wilful paradox. Why, it is a precept of the commonest worldly wisdom that sacrifice is at times an excellent investment, whether for the next world or for this. And all moralists have taught, even the crassest Epicurians, that life insists upon it at almost every turn.

SATAN. A good investment, whether the interest be paid in heavenly glory or in earthly self-complacence, is not a sacrifice, dear Clio. And as to what life demands at every turn, that is renunciation and endurance, since every turn of life means discrimination and choice; preference of large to less, of future to present, of lasting satisfaction to brief or tainted rapture; and of arduous, uncertain adventure with its entrancing breathlessness and heart beat, to yawning security. Last, but not least, life at every turn bids mankind renounce its appetites and its ease for mankind's most abiding comforts, the standards of the human race; nay, it often bids

the individual man renounce his race's habits and commandments for the sake of that secret treasure and torment, his own conscience. Sacrifice such as this is, as you rightly say, of profit. But in so far it is no sacrifice, but mere postponement or exchange of desired things. Satan despairs such barter of good for better ; he claims absolute oblation. My sacrifice is sheer loss ; and the offering to my essential godhead, is waste.

*A pause: the MUSE does not know what she is expected to answer and murmurs merely, “To be sure ! Of course !”*

SATAN. Thus all true sacrifice is to the Power of Evil. And I may add, oftenest obtained by my twin servants Delusion and Confusion ; or in other words, Passion seeing everything through its own likes and dislikes, and Dullness never seeing anything at all. It is most interesting to watch them at their work, heading mankind away from mankind's only efficacious helper, the harsh, responsive Reality of Things.

Thanks largely to this incomparable pair of innocent liars, I may say, without lack of modesty, that of all gods I am the one who has received the hugest holocausts of wasted virtue, hecatombs compared with which all the bulls and rams offered in Solomon's temple, all the superb butchery which smirched the marble fairness of the antique world, are of no more account than the minutest grain of incense which a village acolyte throws on the live coals in his tinsel censer.

THE MUSE. But, at that rate—Forgive me, dear Lord Satan, but History has to run the gauntlet of much impudent *why* and *wherefore*—but, at that rate, how explain that this small world still contains something—life, wealth or virtue—which has not yet been wasted in your rites ?

SATAN. The question is legitimate; and, alas ! contains an answer fatal to my greatness. Waste, dear Clio, by an inconvenient so-called law of nature, tends in its very essence to waste itself away. And then there was a sacrifice in which,

well planned though it was and daringly attempted, Satan did not succeed. You recollect the business of the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil ?

THE MUSE. Recollect it ? Why, I recorded not one, but several conflicting accounts of the occurrence, especially the one now authorized, and the older one official among the Chaldees, from whom our enterprising Jewish plagiarists took it, but merely to change its bearing, as so often happens when men of letters and theologians work on each other's copy. And since you have alluded to this justly popular story, I can't resist the opportunity of ascertaining, once for all, what precisely, among such conflicting versions, really *was* your Lordship's part in that—shall we say ?—bad business.

SATAN. Bad certainly for me, dear Clio !

THE MUSE. Was it so bad for *you*, my Lord ? Perhaps not all you aimed at. But surely you scored something : “ brought death into the world and all our woe,” etc. That was not to be despised.

SATAN. Of course not. And moreover, brought me—as is figured in that mediaeval legend which makes that self-same Tree serve for the wood of the True Cross—brought me, though unsuccessful, the sublimest sacrifice my altars ever gloried in.

THE MUSE (*knowingly*). That has long since been my view ; and sundry early Christian theologians nearer the sources, but since branded as heretical, went so far as to declare that it was to your Lordship that the Deity found Himself obliged, like the Patriarch Abraham, to offer up His Son. This circumstance has indeed made me suspect that the Tree in question could not have really been planted by the Creator, like some horticultural exhibit intended to be looked at but not eaten of.

*The Muse hesitates, looking at Satan with the embarrassment of a person not certain of having guessed the truth, and still less certain whether the truth will be welcome.*

SATAN (*contemptuously*). God neither planted nor forbade its use. So far your guess is right.

THE MUSE (*delighted*). I thought as much ! Then . . . your Lordship must forgive my indiscretion, but History's greatest joy is, after all, that of an occasional shrewd look through a millstone—then, since such really was the case, I mean that Tree not being planted by God, it must have been planted by . . . (*The MUSE looks at SATAN as much as to ask "by you?"*) in short . . . in other words . . . it was planted by . . .

SATAN (*suddenly to the MUSE's amazement and almost consternation*). By Man, and Man's wife, Woman. The All-Creator gave the seed. But like His other seeds, the original multifold Power scattered it broadcast to lie dormant, or quicken, or perish, as might be. Man saved it from the vast indifferent lavishness, and, like the ear of wild wheat, put it into chosen soil, watering and cherishing it as it sprouted, that he might eat its fruit and his children shelter in its shade.

THE MUSE. To be sure ! The precise particulars had somehow escaped my memory. History has really too many things to remember !

SATAN. You were not there, my dear. I *was*. So I will give History a little lesson in her own subject.

THE MUSE (*nettled but inquisitive*). Your Lordship's conversation cannot fail to be instructive.

SATAN. Well then ! This is the story of the Tree of Knowledge. In the beginning which had 'no beginning, mere timeless, aimless Chaos and Old Night, Creation stirred, creating its own powers, the multifold of quickening forces making for shape from substance and for soul from motion. I was not born yet.

THE MUSE (*still irritated*). That much is not unknown,

You were an afterthought, my dear Lord Satan, as befits a rebel.

SATAN. Not a rebel, Clio. But like many who pass for such, a staunch Conservative. I opposed the coming change, loyal to the Chaos and Darkness who had given me birth. I resolved to turn this new-fangled order into anarchy. So, when soul quickened within body, I saw to clogging it by body's clinging habits, and, in return, unsettled secure instincts with half-fledged reason. Man was not yet ; hence neither good nor evil. But in the lowest brutes already pain and pleasure emerged, the great creative poles determining life's tides. And at once I seized upon them for my purpose, employing pleasure to increase pain. Then, as your Milton put it, I sought in good the means to evil, so soon as good and evil came along with Man. And to this purpose I sought to turn that Tree planted from God's seed in God's great park : warping its growth, and when it grew despite me, filling its fruitful branches with chimæras and harpies of all foul kinds.

THE MUSE. That is truly interesting ! But may I point out that your Lordship's nomenclature lacks a trifle in precision. At one moment, you call the Tree in question "Tree of Knowledge," at another "Tree of Good and Evil."

SATAN. They are the same. For, unknown, good is not good, nor evil, evil ; words betokening Man's choice, and answering to Man's needs.

THE MUSE. I see ! That would account for Man's planting that particular Tree, instead of . . . well ! Your Lordship.

SATAN (*looks at the MUSE in amazement*). Instead of *Me!* Of *Me*, dear Clio ? O History, you are a greater goose than I had ever guessed ! Why that Tree's planting meant my doom, however long postponed by my manifold arts. That Tree ! Why I've attacked it with hundred-fold devices :

droughts, hurricanes, and loathsome parasites and the obscene snouts of devils turned to swine. I've bled its sap, stripped off its bark and seared roots and branches with frost and fire ; urged Man to cut it down, lest it should prove a *upas* and strangle all his children in its growth. I've borrowed all Jove's official lightnings to blast it. I have seen it parch and wither, branch drop off after branch, crop mildew after crop. But alas ! only to note with anguish new blossoms and ever unexpected shoots. I, Satan, plant that hateful holy Tree ? O Clio, Clio, that even you could think . . . Why that Tree, which clasps with a hundred branches the willing heavens, is at the same time delving its million roots and rootlets deeper and further into Chaos and Darkness, narrowing and squeezing this Hell of mine till it become no bigger than this pretty little hand of yours. I will tell you a secret, Clio : Absurd as it at present sounds, some day there will be no more room for Satan.

THE MUSE. Indeed ! That is I own a most disheartening supposition, and accounts for a slight vein of, may I call it ?— morbidness, which I have grieved to notice in your Lordship's previous remarks. I must not, however, hide from you that there have been rumours to the effect of Satan being . . . Well ! more correctly described as *longlived* than as *immortal* in the literal sense. If this be true, let me remind you of the saying of that enlightened ruler Sardanapalus : " Eat, drink and be merry ; the rest is not worth a fig ! "

SATAN (*ironically pressing her hand*). Dear Gossip History ! Not Job's comforter, but Satan's !

THE MUSE. And think what opportunities you still have before you ! Although you have made clear to me that it is a case, as the poet so charmingly puts it, of gathering your rosebuds while you may. A European war lasting for years may surely be accounted such. For that, if I am correctly

informed, is the subject of the new Ballet to which you have so graciously invited poor old Clio ?

SATAN (*kissing her finger-tips gallantly*). Just so. My lease of life, though good for many thousand years, is shortening, shrinking with every great success of mine, like the *peau de chagrin* in Balzac's romance. I may, however, tell you that there is another, and more pressing, reason why I have hurried on this great new spectacle.

THE MUSE. The present moment is eminently propitious. I am told by one or two leaders of modern thought, who frequent my *salon*, that mankind has attained amazing control over science's means without so far an inkling of science's discipline and aims. Twentieth-century men appear to be slum-and-warehouse savages retaining the worship of all the good old tribal fetishes and racy obscene emblems, and carrying on their ancient cannibal habits under newfangled and decent names ; yet at the same time wielding, thanks to some dozen men of genius . . .

SATAN. Waste of genius ! Waste of science ! There you have a trifling sample of my sport !

THE MUSE (*not to be interrupted*)—wielding, as I said, appliances which, without enlarging mind or heart, abolish space and multiply all brutish powers a thousandfold. If this account is true, no moment could be better suited for a Dance of Death such as the poor unsophisticated Middle Ages never imagined in their most celebrated nightmares.

SATAN (*who has politely suppressed a yawn*). You are rightly informed, as befits the Muse of History. But that is not the most urgent reason for hurrying on my monster entertainment. Between you and me, in the very strictest confidence, dear Clio, my Ballet Master Death is growing old.

THE MUSE. You have hinted something to that effect. And I confess that I have myself noticed, not without the

deepest concern, that our genial friend has been looking anything but well of late, and seems to be losing some of his faculties. He is said to have been a gay dog in his prime, loving excess for its own sake, and it is whispered, addicted more and more to eccentric pleasures. Such lack of self-restraint tells, alas, even on the most robust constitutions in the long run. Dear old Ballet Master Death ! *un vieux marcheur*, as the French classics say, and now getting *un peu gaga*, I fear.

SATAN. Yes, still pretty spry, but tabetic and threatened with creeping paralysis. His constitution, though I say it who should not, was never really good : Sin, his poor dear mother, was always somewhat of an invalid, and the inter-marriage of very close relations does not, alas, result in robust offspring. Well, well, I shall be the first to suffer for these peccadilloes of my youth ! My poor old nephew ! Alas, dear Clio, our dear incomparable Ballet Master Death is not with us for very much longer.

THE MUSE. You have my deepest sympathy in your—well ! more than paternal anxiety. But there is no real danger—I mean—danger of . . . Surely ? I see as everyone *must* see that Ballet Master Death is no longer what he was, and that science (I begin to understand the prejudice you show against the Tree of Knowledge) has almost, as an Irishman might say, been the death of him. He has been warned off one pestilence after another ; famines\* are growing scarce ; and except in the mystic Orient, religious massacres are everywhere marked “Trespass.” Such constant interference cannot fail to tell on his sensitive nerves, and spoil poor Death’s temper, which was never very good. But I am glad to remember that in his case you need never apprehend the very worst. Death, at all events, can never die outright.

\* Written before the Armistice and the famine which it not only revealed, but exploited.

He and the Creative Power—*Elan Vital* as my friend Bergson calls it—are the two immortals.

SATAN. Not *this* Death.

THE MUSE. *This* Death?

SATAN. Not my Ballet Master, my jester in ordinary, my rowdy boon companion, my incomparable, atrocious, grim, leering, lewd, worm-eaten scarecrow! He alas, *can* die. And, to my sorrow, *will*. The immortal is the other.

THE MUSE. The other *what*?

SATAN. The other Death. The true one. For, although History has not grasped that secret, our Ballet Master merely usurps his name and functions.

THE MUSE (*scared*). In that case, what on earth is your Ballet Master's *real* name?

SATAN. He has too many different names to be called by any single one, unless that name be *Horror*. He is Wasting Sickness, Pestilence, Famine, Contamination, Crime and War. That being the case, men, in speaking of him, most often use and profane the sacred name of Death. This one, my Ballet Master, is, as Milton indiscreetly printed and published, a very near and dear relative of mine, born in my salad days of Sin, another very near relative, all of us children and grandchildren, more or less incestuous, as you know, of the Primæval Chaos.

THE MUSE. Believe me, dear Lord Satan, I had no intention of raking up such intimate family details. But tell me about this other one? This True Death, since you have called him that.

SATAN. The True Death. He has been my enemy since the beginning. Like me, he is an archangel, but mightier. Great Natural Death, twin of Sleep and foster-brother of Love. He was born, by virgin birth, of Life herself, to be

the marshal of Life's triumphal progress. He is not often seen of men, although he works ubiquitously among inanimate things, and his serene face shines through the autumn woods. And thus it comes about that my Ballet Master usurps his part and name. Yet, at times, poets and sages have caught glimpses of his tender eyes. And in brief lulls of evil, when light irradiated some tiniest corner of the world, favoured peoples have had brief vision of him, or heard the quiet rustle of his wings. True Death is that grave, gracious genius, brother of the sad sweet Hermes who conducts the souls, carved by Ionian masons on the great pillar of Ephesus : naked and winged and lovely, marshalling Life's slow triumph. For he it is who makes room for new-comers in just turn, securing the world for Youth and Betterment. He also brings perfect peace to those whose other wishes have been filled brimfull, or cruelly denied. And he leads by the hand that Love who often lurks unconscious till loss awakes it to sweet solemn plenitude. Such is the True Death ; the Natural, Beneficent, and also, the Immortal. (*SATAN pauses, passing his hand across his brow.*)

But with him, dear Muse of History, Satan has no truck ! And now the moment nears when we must ascend from this silent nest of brooding evil to meet *my* Death, Satan's obscene, uproarious Ballet Master, whose manifold pranks convert the Earth into the real Hell which silly mortals fable here below . . . Is there anything you would still ask me to explain, good old Clio ?

THE MUSE. There is indeed, my Lord. We have talked so much philosophy, *very* instructive no doubt, but just a *little* bit too abstract for my taste, that I have had no opportunity of so much as inquiring the title of your new Ballet, and the names of its performers. I understand it is to be serious, not comic ?

SATAN. The greatest tragedies, dear Clio, being founded on

error, are never without an element of the grotesque. But this ludicrous side always escapes those who take part in them, for if they saw the full absurdity, they would refuse to act these frightful scenes. *They* take it seriously, poor creatures, and no wonder ! But to you, dear Muse of History, and your friends the idle Ages-to-Come, this *Ballet of the Nations* (for that's its title) will be an unending source of rhetoric, mistaken lessons, and of such voluptuous horror as thrilled the Vestal Virgins in their cushioned seats high above the arena. And I doubt whether your elevated taste (but, I forgot, you do condescend to anecdote) will quite appreciate the preposterousness which underlies it all. But, to return, the Corps de Ballet is, of course, composed of the various Nations, as the name imports. For the necessary music I have a choice band of Human Passions, those who hide their face and are cried *fy* to by distinguished persons like yourself, and the others who go handsomely masked and stilted ; some also of the simplest, purest, noblest : Idealism, Love of Adventure, Pity and Indignation, above all, Heroism.

THE MUSE. And Patriotism first and foremost.

SATAN. Nay, *Patriotism* is the collective name of the whole orchestra whom I train for these performances ; Human Passions, splendid or sordid, delicate or nasty, all seated, cheek by jowl, playing their instruments without whose steady flow of sublime music and nerve-rending din the Nations could not dance their Dance of Death obedient to my great Ballet Master's bâton. To keep this music up, drinks will be handed round by my well-trained lackeys of the Press and Pulpit : hot and acrid for coarse palates, or heady and full of fuddling fumes ; also subtler ones, such as make everyday trifles seem to the opium-dreamer vast and rainbow-wonderful ; plentiful, deep draughts of words, words and ever more words, concocted in my special distillery by learned recluses like those white-robed monks who manufacture fiery liqueurs in remote

Alpine glens. Thus, as I hope, or else by other arts, sundry among the Virtues will leave their stalls and join in with my band. And those too shocked to join, will drop to sleep and dream of man's purification through suffering.

SATAN *laughs quietly*; the MUSE *considerably louder, clapping her hands*.

THE MUSE. One word more, my Lord. In the priceless biographical notes which your kindness has vouchsafed me, I remark that, as interviewers put these things, your favourite pastime . . .

SATAN. And chief business in life . . .

THE MUSE (*consulting a memorandum*). Is—have I got it down correctly?—is . . .

SATAN (*impatiently*). Is *Waste*. Keep that well in mind, dear Clio; it is the key to all I ever do, and therefore to my coming Ballet.

THE MUSE (*meticulously, still fingering her notes*). It was, of course, with reference to the coming performance that I inquired. *Waste*. Well, of course; Waste of human life, wealth, tears, properties, liberties of all kinds; moreover . . .

SATAN (*interrupting*). And more to my purpose even, Waste of the intelligence, unselfishness and effort which should have rid the world of manifold other evils.

THE MUSE (*going on pertinaciously*) . . . Moreover, as those fashionable cranks who call themselves Eugenists tell us, Waste also of the inheritable vigour of the race; only shirkers and varicose persons, and such as make war profits or are elderly, remaining over to reproduce the Genus Homo. Is that correct, my Lord?

SATAN. As far as it goes. But such gross and obvious wastefulness is not my highest aim. Satan is no materialist, my dear Muse! And for him mere life and happiness must

never be the things Man puts most store by. You may have heard this doctrine preached elsewhere than here, in fact by moralists and divines ever since the world began.

THE MUSE. I have heard it, and am happy to say I hear it still on all hands. But with the addition, saving your Lordship's presence that this doctrine emanates . . . well ! to put it plainly, from God.

SATAN. That God, dear unsuspecting Clio, was Satan in disguise. Is it possible that History has not yet made a note of some, at least, of the many aliases to which my business obliges me to have recourse from time to time ? But to return. What were we talking about ? Ah, to be sure ! Self-sacrifice. Well ! take my word for it : the great Creative Reality, whom men call God or Nature, has no taste for barren flowers of Virtue. It is Satan who grows them with much care and pride. I think I told you the lamentable fact that I am impotent to take delight in anything. With one exception ! The odour of such sanctity as bears no fruit ravishes my disembodied senses ; and, as beseems the saints in whom I nurture it, admits me back to heavenly joys. Virtue for Virtue's own sake ; that is what I ask for. Since to the genuine connoisseur in spiritual rarities, to the full-fledged moral æsthete that I am, the beauty of self-sacrifice must never be marred by base utility. My coming Ballet will make that clear to you. You shall hear the devastating blast of Indignation's wings and Pity's unforgiving sobs. You shall be shown young Heroism's radiant face, as blind as a stone statue's. But I notice there is something more you want me to explain ?

THE MUSE (*hesitating*). Your Lordship has been so generous of information that . . . in short, I fear my notes may present some slight obscurity or incoherence when I come to re-read them. Is it asking too great a favour to say how deeply

grateful I should be if you would repeat once more your leading definition of yourself ?

SATAN. With the greatest pleasure (*dictates*) : *I am the Waster of all sorts of Virtue.*

*The MUSE bows effusive thanks.*

SATAN. But hark ! Cerberus once more at his alarums ! Go, dear Muse of History. Those must be your friends, the vain and bodiless, but most effective, Ages-to-Come. Please open to them.

*The MUSE disappears and bolts are heard being drawn. Meanwhile SATAN throws himself back wearily in his corner of the sofa, passes his hand over his eyes and mutters meditatively to himself.*

SATAN. The Ballet of the Nations ! My new masterpiece. And, as I sometimes fear, the last of its time-honoured sort. Well ! if the last, let it be the greatest !

*The MUSE returns, introducing the CHORUS OF AGES-TO-COME, classically draped and veiled in the stuff that dreams are made of.*

CHORUS OF AGES-TO-COME. Your very obedient humble servants at your Archangelic Lordship's commands.

*They curtsey to the ground. SATAN has risen to meet them and waves a gracious greeting to each member of the CHORUS.*

SATAN. Pray do not speak like that, delightful Ages-to-Come ! Why, not half an hour ago I was remarking to our illustrious friend Clio that, besides her own, there is no applause I covet as much as that of your most alluring and elusive selves. And, like her, you are much more than a mere audience, though the most appreciative. History helps me in my shows with her so-called *Lessons*, which, as you know, always inculcate the great untruth that there is nothing new

under the sun ; and History also makes it her business to keep old wounds from healing, and sees to Hatred flourishing like the green bay tree of Victory. Thus does the Past—or what passes muster as Past—collaborate with Satan. You, ever-disembodied Ages-to-Come, represent the no less needed assistance of a no less apocryphal Future ! The Future which is always the Future because it can never turn into the present, and which therefore possesses the unparalleled attraction of what can be pursued but never clutched ; the same prestige, in fact, enjoyed in pious days by the old-fashioned Kingdom of Heaven, making Men eager to sacrifice the peace and happiness of a tangible *to-day*, for the sake of the peace and happiness of an unsubstantial *to-morrow*, spun, like cobweb, out of their own sick brains.

But enough ! Come my efficacious Chorus of unrealities. Come, great Recorder of all that does and does not happen. Let us ascend from Hell's brooding stillness to the World's Theatre which awaits you, its eternal Patrons ; and its Lessee and Manager, myself.

*SATAN signs to the AGES-TO-COME to troop off in front, and follows, offering his arm to the MUSE OF HISTORY.*

END OF THE FIRST PART



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PART II  
THE BALLET OF THE NATIONS

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A ROMAIN ROLLAND  
FRATERNELLEMENT



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## THE BALLET OF THE NATIONS

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“What is the sorriest thing that enters Hell?  
Not any of the Sins. . . .”—Rossetti.

### ACT I

*No Place, Nowhere.* A street widening to a square, forms flanking pieces to a building on whose architrave is inscribed in immense letters, “*The World; a Theatre of Varieties, Lessee and Manager, SATAN.*” The front of the theatre consists almost entirely of one colossal door, now closed, but which being opened allows the whole interior to be seen from the flight of steps leading up to it. To the right of the theatre, the house of SELF-INTEREST, with a shiny door-plate and knocker; to the left a rag-and-bottle shop, half closed, belonging to WIDOW FEAR: a few adjacent houses (forming a flanking semicircle to the theatre) with large door-plates inscribed: TRUTHFULNESS, JUSTICE, TEMPERANCE, EQUANIMITY, etc., whose owners are seen yawning at the windows, and then crossing the square after looking on wearily and disappearing by a side door into the theatre.

*What these SLEEPY VIRTUES are languidly watching is a group of HUMAN PASSIONS with hand-barrows, busily unloading their instruments and desks and carrying them up the steps to an unseen stage-door in the rear of the theatre. Each of these PASSIONS, attired in appropriate allegoric garments, bears his or her name on a silver badge hung round the neck by a chain: GREED, LOYALTY, DISCIPLINE, COMRADESHIP, JEALOUSY, EGOTISM, BULLYING, ENNUI, and others; some very handsome and with a family resemblance to the SLEEPY*

VIRTUES, others hideous and sluttish, or with grotesque attempts to hide their ugliness and mean appearance, or monstrous affectation of dignity.

When all the instruments and desks have been carried into the theatre, a little body of these PASSIONS return and join in carrying up the steps a carved handrailing or balustrade intended to separate the orchestra from the stalls, and bearing in ornamental letters the words, "Patriotism ; reserved for members of the Orchestra."

All this is being done under the impatient superintendence of BALLET MASTER DEATH, who fusses around and occasionally consults his watch. BALLET MASTER DEATH is seen at first only from the back, a long, lank figure in loose black evening clothes (long tailcoat) with a long, pianist's head of hair round a bald shiny patch. There is something extraordinarily angular and unaccountably uncanny in his figure and movements. But it is only when he turns full round that we become aware that he is a skeleton, and that the grey head of hair surmounts a grinning skull. Then we wonder that we did not notice that his hands and feet, both bare and protruding from over-short sleeves and trousers, are skeleton also.

A few NEUTRAL NATIONS, wearing armlets inscribed "Neutrality," look shyly at these proceedings, pretending to be examining the façades of the surrounding houses and the contents of their own pockets ; afraid of getting mixed up in the performance, but enormously attracted by it. After this dumb show has gone on a little while, BALLET MASTER DEATH showing more and more impatience, a slight earthquake rocks the theatre and adjacent buildings, causing the various personages to stop short in whatever they are doing ; and, as its rumble subsides, the earth yawns at the foot of the theatre steps, and SATAN arises majestically, helping the MUSE OF HISTORY out of the depths, and followed by the classic and unsubstantial chorus of AGES-TO-COME. The

*earth closes after them. The place, which, with the earthquake, had become suddenly dark, is lit by the sinister luminousness emanating from SATAN's archangelic person, until the whole is suffused with a strange and ominous light as if of a fog, in which near objects are oddly visible and others shade away into nothingness. The EVIL PASSIONS fall on their knees, the PASSIONS who are, or are deemed, respectable, retire hurriedly. BALLET MASTER DEATH, for the first time turning fully round and revealing his skeleton nature, bows very low, one hand on his white waistcoat.*

SATAN (*grasping him by the hand*). At last we meet again, dear Ballet Master Death! I need not introduce you to our old friend, Clio, Muse of History by profession, but, may I say it? by preference and true vocation, dramatic critic. She is a great lover of our joint shows, and has graciously undertaken a full account of this, I trust, our finest one.

THE MUSE (*curtsying ceremoniously*). I have had the pleasure of meeting you two or three times before; but one can't expect so busy an artist as Ballet Master Death to bear in mind all his many admirers.

DEATH (*gruffly*). No, that indeed he can't, Ma'am. There is far too much to do in the world, and a fearful lot of arrears. (*To SATAN*) Come, my Lord. Time presses, and we shall never get our Orchestra together; all these Human Passions have grown so lackadaisical of late!

SATAN. All right, all right. Give me the list of the performers or rather . . . I am sure the Muse will kindly help us in our roll-call. But are all the Dancing Nations in readiness?

DEATH. Oh, for ever so long; they are already behind the curtain, practising their steps and settling their head-pieces comfortably on their shoulders, which is never easy. *They* are all right. And so is the audience—the Neutral Nations have taken their seats. It's the Orchestra troubles me (*looking rudely over the shoulder of the MUSE, who is holding the*

*list handed her ceremoniously by SATAN).* All these (*dabbing his skeleton finger on to it*) have still to come, confound them all for an idle, vapouring, bloodless, fiddle-faddling lot! Mankind has coddled its Passions up of late years, or fed them on humanitarian water-gruel, till you can't recognize the anæmic wretches!

SATAN. Oh, that's quite easily mended, once the performance is in full swing, dear Ballet Master Death! then it's *brandy for heroes*, eh? Come, I will help you call them. (*Knocks loudly and repeatedly at the door to the right.*) Hullo, you there! Are you deaf or asleep?

THE MUSE (*rising from a packing case on to which SATAN had politely bid her be seated, and where she has been conning the list of performers, and following SATAN*). Forgive my indiscretion. I want my notes to be as full as possible. Who is it you are calling, my Lord?

SATAN. Self-Interest, a most industrious fellow, but unluckily not much addicted to such artistic pleasures as our shows. It is he who, on week days, plays unremittingly the ground bass of Life.

SATAN *knocks still more loudly.*

SELF-INTEREST (*heard from within*). This is a half-holiday. Call to-morrow. I'm a Trade Unionist and can't break the rules. I must have my sleep out. Let me see: What was I dreaming about? Yes, to be sure (*drowsily*) the Coming Reconstruction of So-ci-e-ty on a more—a more—rational . . .

DEATH (*shaking his skeleton fist at the house of SELF-INTEREST*). Confound your insolence! Is that a way to answer Satan and Death? But Self-Interest was always a dull dog; not a spark of divine fire to be struck out of him! Your Lordship need not have wasted your time and mine in calling on such a gross modern materialist.

SATAN. May I point out that you skeletons are just a trifle

testy? Don't you see, excellent but shortsighted Ballet Master Death, that knocking at Self-Interest's door has brought Fear, that over-retiring slut, to her window? Hi! Widow Fear! It's only a couple of old friends inviting you to a little entertainment.

'THE MUSE (*writing on her tablets, while what she is describing is seen happening by the spectator*). So, Fear, squalid beyond all other Passions, came down, hesitating just a little, because she had heard Self-Interest refuse the invitation. But she was speedily dragged along by her shabby, restless twins, Suspicion and Panic; and the family carried penny whistles and fog-horns and a cracked storm-and-massacre bell, genuine mediæval, but wrapped in yesterday's *Daily Mail* and *Globe*.

SATAN (*to the Muse*). Rather an unpresentable lot, though first-rate performers. I hope we have something really handsome, a few genuine Virtues, to make up for them, since the Nations have grown detestably superfine of late, and some of the other indispensable members of our Orchestra aren't very attractive either. Ah! the very thing! (*Goes forward to meet two new-comers.*) I am enchanted that you deign to join our amateur band, small but very choice and famous under the name of Patriotism, my dear Lady Idealism and my brilliant young Prince Adventure. (*He rustles his wings in ceremonious salutation to the new-comers.*)

'THE MUSE (*writes after looking round*). And Idealism and Adventure, bride and bridegroom, having come out of their palace of cloud and sunbeams and rainbow, went up into the theatre. Very magnificent they were, and of noblest bearing, if a little over-dressed. Idealism carried a silver trumpet and Adventure a woodland horn. (*SIN and her crew slink in.*) There came also Death's mother (or wife, for their family relations are primitive and best not inquired into), Sin, whom the all-knowing Gods call *Disease*; nor was there any need of calling *her*. With her came her well-known crew,

Rapine, Lust, Murder, and Torture, fitted out with bull-roarers and rattles and other cannibalish instruments.

SATAN (*standing near the Muse on the steps*). Here comes Hatred along with Self-Righteousness.

MUSE (*looks up and then writes*). Pretending not to be acquainted, but nevertheless hurrying together out of the tavern of Vanity, and trundling between them a huge double-bass and a small harmonium, on which, as soon as they had unpacked, Self-Righteousness most obligingly offered to give Hatred his right pitch. Hatred, the stupidest of all Passions, yet the most cunning in deceits, brought with him a double-bass of many strings : shrill and plaintive gut, rasping steel and growling bronze, and more besides ; some strangely comforting in their tone like a rich cordial, although they heartened men to massacre each other.

DEATH (*in a hurry*). That'll do to begin with ; and there are a lot of the Orchestra, both virtuous and vicious Passions, already within. Heroism will join as soon as we have begun, and he can be dumped anywhere. See ! here troop the Dancers for a few words of encouragement from your Lordship. By the way, you mustn't mind if they address you as Lord of Hosts ; they are rather ignorant of everything except my especial dances.

SATAN. Oh, I have so many *noms de guerre* ! my dear Ballet Master.

DEATH. Since some of you have your instruments handy, just strike up a bit, you, Widow Fear, and you, Madame Idealism ; and you, Hatred, growl on the deep string, not *too* loud. Just a bar or two, no matter what, only to make the Nations look up and get over that tiresome *mauvaise honte* of theirs.

THE MUSE (*writing*). The Nations had meanwhile arrived by twos and twos on the top step of the theatre, each brilliant

and tidy in its ballet dress, which was far better cut and of handsomer stuff, of course, than its everyday broadcloth or rags. And Idealism and Adventure, Hatred and Self-Righteousness, all fell to tuning, for unlike some other members of the Orchestra they were sticklers for correctness.

*Enter SCIENCE and ORGANIZATION.*

THE MUSE (*not writing, but speaking as she looks round*). Whom have we here ? I have never seen either of these before in all the centuries of my regular attendance at Death's Ballets. All other Human Passions are correctly dressed in allegoric fashion, classical, or mediæval, or biblical. But one of these two new-comers, might, for all I see, be a clerk in a public office ; and as to the lady, if one may call her such, she seems to be wearing a laboratory smock, let alone spectacles ; uncompromisingly literal and modern.

DEATH (*jumping down three steps with a clatter, and flying at the new-comers*). Get out with you ! Kick them out ! Kick out the new-fangled intruders who want to spoil our fun ! Knock them down ! Trample on them ! Don't you see they are aliens ? Spies ? Spies in the service of Life and Progress ?

SATAN (*with an archangelic gesture which paralyses the uplifted skeleton arm of Death*). Hush, hush ! Which is Master here, I wonder ? Will you never learn manners, you senseless old relic of the Stone Age, with your rabble of instruments fit for an ethnological museum ? (*Turns to the new-comers.*) Excuse his country manners, dear Madame Science and dear Councillor Organization. You know the ways of skeletons ; their skulls are inevitably empty.

THE MUSE (*writing*). The two new-comers carried new-fangled instruments, and fell to unpacking them ; Science, a handy gramophone ; and Organization a miniature pianola with its various rollers.

SCIENCE. Do not mention it, my Lord. *Qui sait comprendre*

*sait tout pardonner*, so it is part of my professional duty to find excuses for your Ballet Master's very interesting primitiveness.

ORGANIZATION. It's all as it should be. And of course there's no denying that Science and I *are* permanently on the staff of Life and Progress ; but that firm is working slack at present ; so we feel at liberty to take a brief temporary engagement elsewhere.

THE MUSE (*writing*). Satan extended both hands in welcome, and Science snatched the opportunity of hurriedly verifying whether or not they were furnished with claws.

SATAN (*low to SCIENCE and ORGANIZATION*). Nothing could be more conducive to the success of our Ballet, and I only hope our collaboration may grow permanent. You see, Death is getting a bit old for his job and dreadfully prejudiced. Besides I fear it can't be denied that both of you *have* done one or two things calculated to rub him the wrong way ; and then everything is so dreadfully exaggerated by the daily press! Come here, you peppery old Ballet Master and salute the lady and gentleman prettily. (*Places one hand above DEATH's head, and playfully twitches his arms and legs like a marionette on a string for the amusement of SCIENCE and ORGANIZATION.*) That's right! Now shake hands with this illustrious couple, who will keep up our Ballet with their wonderful mechanical instruments when the rest of our classic band have neither strings nor wind left. And now you had better so far unbend as to tell me how you intend the members of your Orchestra to sit once we are all in the theatre ; and also give a few last instructions to all our excellent and obliging performers. Is all the Orchestra here ? Let me see the list of them. Dear Clio, this is work for you, like Homer's catalogue of ships. Please read out the list of the Passions constituting the famous Orchestra called Patriotism.

THE MUSE (*reading the list. As she calls each name, its owner makes obeisance to SATAN*). Greed, Loyalty, Chivalry,

Comradeship, Reverence, Discipline, Routine, Ennui, Egotism, Prejudice, Pugnacity, Bullying.

**DEATH.** Those are already in the theatre with their instruments.

**THE MUSE.** • Justice . . . Ah! here she comes, august, stern Daughter of the Gods! And, I may add, most successfully got up like her own statue, the one of blood-coloured porphyry on that pillar in Florence.

**SATAN.** Exactly! Her falchion drawn ready to decapitate someone she cannot see, and that neat bandage on her eyes making her unaware of what it is she weighs out in her scales with such unerring muscular precision. I have a genuine regard for Justice, Clio.

**THE MUSE.** Idealism and Adventure—

**SATAN.** They will sit with some of those already inside. Loyalty plays first fiddle to Discipline's second ; Reverence is the alto, and Routine the bass, of that quartet. Ennui is, of course, waiting for Adventure.

**THE MUSE.** Self-Righteousness—

**SATAN.** On the same side as Justice, Idealism, Chivalry, Comradeship, Prejudice and Pugnacity ; but see that Self-Righteousness be on no account separated from Hatred, whom she has to keep up to his pitch. Egotism, Bullying, Jealousy and Cruelty will sit next to him.

**THE MUSE.** Science and Organization—

**SATAN.** Must be given distinguished seats a little apart.

**THE MUSE.** Statecraft—

**SATAN.** That is our deaf prompter ; he is in his little box.

**THE MUSE.** Widow Fear, with Suspicion and Panic ; Sin, with Rapine, Murder, Lust and Torture.

**SATAN.** In a corner well to themselves. They are never very presentable, and will soon be drunk. Many thanks, Clio.

*DEATH fusses for a moment in and out, hurrying the performers into their places. CLIO snatches the opportunity of coming close to SATAN and saying in a coquettishly imploring whisper:*

**THE MUSE.** Dearest Lord Satan, in recognition of our ancient friendship, and of the tiny share of collaboration with which you honour me, forgive me if I venture to implore you on my own behalf and that of my friends, the so appreciative Ages-to-Come . . .

**SATAN.** Any request of yours is granted beforehand, Clio. Except the one you are about to make. You want me to abolish the regulation, old as Time and Change, by which none but the Dancing Nations and myself can hear the music of the Orchestra of Passions. Is that it ?

**THE MUSE.** It is indeed. And dear, dearest Lord Satan, forgive my importunity if I venture to say that ever since always it has been too frightfully tantalizing to look on at the dancing without hearing a sound.

**SATAN.** I have allowed you to hear Heroism's triumphant voice. Let that be sufficient ; his music is worth hearing.

**THE MUSE.** Don't think me ungrateful or unappreciative. Of course Heroism's singing is quite exceptionally good, but it's always the same, *connu, archi-connu*, as the critics say. Besides it isn't *he* who really makes the music which is being danced to ; and it is very hard upon the Muse of History to have to provide little musical *motifs*, always elevating, of course, but rather tame, and palm them off as the real thing to the Ages-to-Come. The presence of Science and Organization led me to hope that some modern contrivance might at last —

**SATAN.** No, Clio. And you may thank your stars this Law of Mind and Matter admits of no infraction. Believe me ; could History know the true strains which set and keep the Nations dancing, the folly and the frenzy which move those

limbs, there would soon be an end to your well-deserved popularity. Besides, if more than the faintest echo of my Band's playing reached any ears than those of Satan and his poor crazed Dancers, it is upon the cards that its grotesque, alluringly heart-rending horror might disincline Posterity for all such entertainments . . . So let us drop the subject, my good Muse. Now, Ballet Master Death, have you any last instructions ?

DEATH (*bowing obsequiously to SATAN*). Just one or two, my Lord. (*Turns to the performers.*) Ladies and Gentlemen, Valiant Nations of my Corps du Ballet, and ever-responsive Passions of the Orchestra so justly admired under the name of Patriotism!

Let me remind you that, for the satisfaction of our Stage Lessee, my Lord Satan, and the admiration (I trust) of our enlightened patrons, the Muse of History and the Ages-to-Come, you are about to take part in the vastest and most new-fashioned spectacle of Slaughter and Ruin I have so far had the honour of putting on to the World's Stage, although I hope that its attractions may cause it to become only the first and only the least considerable of a long and incessant series of similar glorious exhibitions of what Mankind can do under my guidance.

As regards instructions, you really require none : the Nations have of late years concentrated all their educational resources on this sole object. And the Human Passions, however self-engrossed and often at loggerheads, are always eager to accept the unique opportunity for untrammelled manifestation of their violence which is afforded by the symphonies of Patriotism.

Once fairly started, the Dancing Nations can all be trusted to obey the bâton of Ballet Master Death, and, as to details, the more each one departs from the regulation steps, the more intelligently will the dancers of the opposite side respond to his improvisations, my Ballet belonging essentially to the category of art called *imitative*.

As to the music, I need scarcely impress upon each of the Passions to keep strictly to his or her own part, and never be put out by the dissonances and conflicting rhythms produced by the contradictory parts of his fellow-performers : such incoherence conduces to the volume and impressiveness of the patriotic whole, and is rendered acceptable to the most fastidious ear by the perfection of the national unison, and the constant recurrence of some favourite sentimental theme.

The ground plan of our Ballet is so simple that no rehearsals have been necessary, and its variety arises out of the ever-increasing number and incompatibility of the allied dancers and their characteristic manners.

In obedience to the high ethical taste of modern times, the main *motif* of our performance is that of each disinterested and indignant nation seeking only to repel the aggression of its *vis-à-vis* and to uphold the eternal rules of justice and humanity. There are subsidiary themes of outstanding dancers flying to the rescue of the presumable victors, not without some delicate hesitation as to which to join ; likewise of main groups overcoming the coyness of unwilling dancers and inveigling them into their terrific mazes. And as the performance proceeds there may be some graceful furtive attempts at *pas de deux* between dancers of opposite sides, and some very entertaining figures of the sort we dancing-masters call *chassez-croisez*.

One last recommendation, but all important ! Let me remind the Passions about to take their seats in the Orchestra of Patriotism that the duration of our performance depends entirely on their activity. Not all the training of the best trained Nations; not all the good will of poor Ballet Master Death ; nay, not the sovereign command of Satan in person, could keep our Ballet going if the music of the Passions were to stop. The members of the Orchestra of Patriotism are therefore urgently requested to replenish their energies by unstinting use of the appropriate refreshments, carefully

warmed up commonplaces and fiery drams of eloquence, which will be handed round unceasingly by Lord Satan's lackeys of the Press and Pulpit. And now we may all take our appointed places in the Theatre of the World.

*The PASSIONS, grasping or trundling their instruments, go up the theatre steps and enter it by a small side door marked "To the Orchestra." The DANCING NATIONS ascend the same steps but remain standing on the topmost, deployed, waiting for orders. BALLET MASTER DEATH collects his notes and his bâton and is going to follow them when he is stopped by SATAN.*

SATAN. Good gracious! We seem all to have forgotten Heroism; he isn't even on the list. Shall we ask the Muse to rout him out? He is accustomed to her.

DEATH. Heroism? Oh, I always leave him to himself; he comes as soon as he hears the music, and he can always be squeezed in anywhere. That's the advantage of his being blind; it makes him the most obliging and least troublesome of all my Orchestra; quite a different pair of boots from stuck-up creatures like Idealism and Chivalry and so forth, who are afraid of rubbing shoulders with the Lower Passions. Heroism, bless him, won't mind sitting cheek by jowl even with Fear, that ~~filthy~~ slut, or surrounded by the cannibal rout of Sin. But here he comes!

THE MUSE (*writing*). At that moment there entered Heroism, with limbs like a giant's, blushes like a girl's and eyes like a merry child's, but which saw not.

SATAN. Welcome, Heroism! Our prince of Tenors! (*Goes out to meet HEROISM and offers to lead him, but HEROISM waves him off. SATAN pretends not to notice the snub, and with sham cordiality:*) We were just saying, my accomplished young friend, that you are the most modest and reliable of our Orchestra, ready for everything! Why, I remember my French

Revolution Ballet, when Heroism and Panic played not only a duet, but at the same instrument, four hands!

THE MUSE (*not writing, but joining enthusiastically in the conversation*). What a Ballet that was! Ballet Master Death's masterpiece, and yours, my Lord Satan, certainly! The splendid tragic irony of the Marat-Robespierre-guillotining-theme combined with that of Valmy and Liberty!

SATAN. Yes, dear Muse of History. I don't deny that *was* our greatest hit in modern times. But, with goodwill, this new Dance of our Ballet Master Death shall be as full of all manner of terror and irony, and of far vaster dimensions : the whole stage of Europe, not one paltry corner only!

DEATH (*affectionately to HEROISM*). Come here, my boy ; you have always been dutiful and loving to poor old Daddy Death, and cared more for him than for any other of the Immortals.

THE MUSE (*writing*). So saying, the skeleton scarecrow tapped the budding cheeks of Heroism, that star-like youth, with eyes which laughed but saw not, for even as his cousin Love, he is blind ever since the cradle. And Heroism, at the sound of Death's well-known voice, kissed his bony fingers with rapture ; and grasping the drum with which he accompanies himself, modestly took his stand between Fear and Hatred, unconscious of their foulness.

*A bell rings from inside the theatre.* DEATH takes the arm of HEROISM, who thrills and blushes with joy at the honour ; and turning to SATAN,

DEATH. It would be well, my Lord, if you would say a few words of encouragement to my Corps de Ballet.

SATAN (*nods gravely*). I will. (*He solemnly takes up his position opposite the deployed DANCING NATIONS. He folds his great bodiless wings about him so as to form a dalmatic of black radiance, and stands a second or two in majestic and awful*

*silence. On his right is DEATH leaning on the arm of HEROISM with wide, blind eyes ; on his left the MUSE ; the AGES-TC COME kneel in a circle all round.)*

SATAN. Dearly beloved Nations, called heretofore Brethren in Christ, and henceforth to become true Brethren in Satan, receive my blessing which speeds you to destruction.

Let the light of judgment and of choice be blotted from your minds ; and let your clean volitions be submerged and rotted away by the hot and turbid lusts of possession and cruelty welling up from the dark unconsciousness of your soul.

Ye are going forth, O Nations, to join Death's Dance even as candid high-hearted virgins who have been decoyed by fair show into the house of prostitution, where sins they never dreamed of become their daily trade, and where they dread release because they have kept company with perjurors and cut-throats, and become estranged from the honesty of common life. For however pure you enter into it, the Dance of Ballet Master Death brings you to contamination and barrenness.

Moreover, with your dancing I will interrupt the great eternal, fruitful give-and-take of life.

I will hold up the enriching commerce of different spiritual climates ; and the regions of the earth shall cease to be each other's completion.

I will forbid the banns of marriage of True Minds ; and make those born to love one another despise and abhor.

Goodness shall cease to call across the earth to goodness ; neither shall Wisdom stretch helping hands to Wisdom. And the sweet affinities of common humanity shall attract no longer.

But I will knit together the good which is in every people with its own folly and wickedness till these grow together, as one flesh and one soul, in the fear and hatred which they share.

The lucid eye of the spirit shall be bloodshot and blinded. The hand, once cunning to give shape and usefulness, shall, like the hands of the epileptic, be strong only to strike,

wounding itself and others. The mouth, whereby men understood each other's truth and goodness, shall foam out only lies and boasts and insults. And the heart shall go out no longer to other hearts, but only melt in self-pity and blaze in vindictiveness.

And none of you, O Nations, shall know your degradation.

The blood of martyrs shall bring forth new executioners. And out of the tears of bereaved women shall arise the slaughter of other sons and other husbands.

And every rarest and most needed virtue shall be wasted as a burnt offering upon my altars.

The blessing of Satan attend you, who go forth in purity and strength to return in pollution and enfeeblement. Evil be the fruition of your goodness, and chaos the reward of your discipline.

SATAN raises his hand in benediction. The NATIONS salute with their banners and cry : “ Arise, O Lord of Hosts ! ”

END OF ACT I.

## ACT 2

*Inside the Theatre of the World. SATAN on a raised seat. The MUSE on a low stool by his side, holding her tablets and stylus. Behind her the chorus of AGES-TO-COME. Opposite, continuing the semicircle of the pit, a few NEUTRAL NATIONS and a number of SLEEPY VIRTUES, among whom, however, PITY and INDIGNATION are eager and expectant.*

*The PASSIONS are seated in front of the stage, in the narrower part of the pit railied off by a carved balustrade, inscribed "Patriotism: reserved for Members of the Orchestra."*

*The stage is closed by a background of August harvest-fields at sunset. This is gradually darkened and replaced by the starlit vault, which deepens like a cavern and gradually fills with fire, smoke, rockets and explosions.*

SATAN. Begin your record, Muse of History!

*The MUSE rises and writes, standing by the side of SATAN's throne, declaiming what she is writing in a clear, impassive voice. The performance on the stage, of course, proceeds in accordance with her spoken description, but a trifle in advance of it; and the MUSE pauses now and then, resuming her low seat next to SATAN in order to allow the action to repeat itself and accumulate.*

THE MUSE. Now, the beginning of the Ballet of the Nations was as follows: Among the Nations appointed by Satan to dance the Dance of Death--for a few had to be kept to swell the audience, which would otherwise have consisted only of some Sleepy Virtues and the Ages-to-Come, all bodiless and difficult to please--among these Dancing Nations there was a Very Little One, far too small to have danced with the others

and particularly unwilling to dance at all, because experience had taught it that the dances of Ballet Master Death were apt to take place across its prostrate body. This being the case, it was always informed that all it need do was to stay quite quiet for the others to dance round. And as it stood there, at the western side of the stage, two or three of the tallest and finest dancers danced up in a graceful step, smiling, wreathing their arms and blowing kisses, all of which is the Ballet language for "Don't be afraid; we will look after you." And danced away, wagging their finger at a particular one of their *vis-à-vis*, who was also curtseying and smiling in the most engaging manner on the other side. During this prelude, Idealism, Self-Righteousness and Routine played a few conventional variations on the well-known Diplomatic Hymn of Peace, the music being conducted, so far, not yet by Ballet Master Death, but by the Deaf Prompter Statecraft from his little hidden box. And to this music the various Nations pirouetted unconcernedly about, although Fear, with Suspicion and Panic, were beginning to whistle, and to clatter that mediæval tocsin-bell concealed in newspapers. Science and Organization were also busy putting rollers into their mechanical instruments.

And as the Smallest-of-All the Corps de Ballet stood quite alone in the middle of the western stage, that same tall and wonderfully well-trained Dancer sidled up to it with polite gestures of "by your leave," and, suddenly placing his huge horny paws on the Tiny One's shoulders, prepared for leap-frog. But at a sign from Death's bâton, and with a hideous crash of all the instruments of Satan's orchestra, and a magnificent note from Heroism's clear voice, the poor Smallest-Dancer-of-All tripped up that Giant and made him reel. But the Giant instantly recovered his feet, although his eyes became bloodshot and his brain swam; and, flinging the poor Smallest Dancer on the floor, he set to performing on its poor

little body one of the most terrific *pas seuls* that Ballet Master Death had ever invented ; while the *vis-à-vis* Nations danced slowly up till they came to grips over that Smallest-of-All the Dancers, who lay prone on the ground, and continued so to lie till the end of the Ballet, lifeless between its aggressors and its defenders.

*The Ages-to-Come burst into shouts of horrified rapture like spectators at a bull-fight. The Orchestra subsides for a moment, and only the drum is heard.*

SATAN (*low to the Muse*). Hark ! The drum of Heroism ! Of all the instruments the one, I sometimes think, most to my liking. No other has such imperious power over the nerves and muscles, and so little to say to the mind. For the drum knows neither intervals nor modes nor modulation, things requisite alike for music and rational existence ; it recognizes neither resemblance nor diversity ; but, like the glorious blind boy whom it urges on, goes marching, marching, marching, without knowledge of why, whence, or whither.

THE MUSE (*writing and declaiming*). But while this was happening at the western end of the Theatre, a symmetrical action had begun at the eastern, where a Nation, who had long been forbidden to dance on its own account, because it had been made the slave of some of the others, was being danced across like a carpet by two of the great *vis-à-vis*, each of whom would point at it with gestures of pity and protection, but without ceasing to trample it, until the to-and-fro's of their dance had pounded it out of all shape and almost out of existence.

DEATH (*rapping on his desk and silencing the Orchestra*). My Lord Satan ! Interesting Neutral Nations still in the audience ; noble, though somewhat drowsy, Virtues who are looking on ; and you who reward Ballet and Ballet Master with undying glory, illustrious and bodiless Ages-to-Come ! These two first figures of our Ballet, symmetrical but

different in their style of horror,' are called "The Defence of the Weak." They will continue unremittingly all through the performance, and will lead up to the final triumph of such Small Nationalities (and they are all cordially pressed to join in the dance!) as may have limbs or life to dance with.

*The Orchestra resumes, and the dancing gets more complicated. No one speaks for a minute or so, till the Muse, erect by SATAN's side, begins once more her writing and reciting.*

THE MUSE. For whereas the Ballet had begun with the tender radiance of an August sunset above half-harvested fields, where the reaping-machines hummed peacefully among the corn-stooks, and the ploughs cut into the stubble, the progress of the performance had seen the deep summer starlit vault flushed by the flare of distant burning farms, and its blue solemnity rent by the fitful track of rockets, and the luminous fans of searchlights and the Roman candles and Catherine-wheels of far-off explosions. Until, little by little, the heavens, painted such a peaceful blue, were blotted out by masses of flame-lit smoke and poisonous vapours, rising and sinking, coming forward and receding like a stifling fog, but ever growing denser and more rent by dreadful leaping fires, and swaying obedient to Death's bâton no less than did the bleeding Nations of his Corps de Ballet. In and out of that lurid chasm they moved, by twos or threes; now lost to view in the billows of fiery darkness, now issuing thence toward the Ballet Master's desk, or suddenly revealed, clasped in terrific embrace, by the leaping flame of an exploding magazine; while overhead fluttered and whirred great wings, which showered down bomb-lightnings. Backwards and forwards moved the Nations in that changing play of light and darkness, and undergoing themselves uncertain and fearful changes of aspect. (*Interrupting herself.*) A stirring page, my Clio, and one I would on no account have missed the

writing of! (*Looks at the stage muttering, "Good! Good!" then resumes her writing, while the Ballet and the fireworks go on with all kinds of variations.*)

*The voice of HEROISM, a youthful and very pure tenor, is heard above the din of the Orchestra, singing the Marseillaise to the accompaniment of his drum.*

SATAN (*low, to the MUSE*). Do you hear him, Clio? He shall be made to sing the other splendid murderous songs by turns. Not only this, which spurred the French at Valmy and the Bridge of Arcole, but those of the German students who fought at Leipzig; and also that fine theme which dear old Haydn wrote, and Hofer sang while they led him out to be shot in the moat at Mantua. For, as you are aware, Heroism is of no country but of all equally, a real Cosmopolitan, although his chief business is international extermination. A divine genius truly! and appreciated on all hands. The only fault which Satan finds with him, since none of us, dear Clio, are faultless, is that while wasting himself sublimely to no purpose, he is apt to remember the common human nature of all Nations and make them love each other in the midst of their mutual slaughter. But that is a failing of which I trust the present Ballet may cure him once for all.

*The Ballet and fireworks go on. HEROISM's voice, drowned for a little by the Orchestra of PASSIONS, is heard once more singing the first bars of the "Wacht am Rhein."*

THE MUSE (*writing*). Since you should know that, although politicians say the contrary, Nations can never die outright. Just as the Gods of Valhalla could slash each other to ribbons after breakfast and resurrect for dinner, so every Nation can dance Death's Dance, however bled and maimed; dance upon stumps, or trail itself along, a living jelly of blood and trampled flesh, providing only its Head remains unhurt. And that Head, which each Nation calls its Government, but the

other Nations call *France* or *Russia* or *Britain* or *Germany* or *Austria* or *Italy* for short, that Head of each Nation dancing Death's Dance (except that of the Smallest Dancer, who never ceased being prostrate on the ground) is very properly helmeted, and rarely gets so much as a scratch, so that, with its innocent stolid face, it can continue to turn towards the Ballet Master's bâton, and order the Nation's body to put forth fresh limbs, and even when that is impossible, to keep its stumps dancing ever new figures in obedience or disregard to what are called the rules of the Dance. This being the case, Death could keep up the Dance regardless of the condition of the Dancers, and of the condition also of the stage, which was such that, what between blood and mud and entrails and heaps of ravaged properties, it became scarcely possible to move even a few yards to and fro.

Yet dance they did, chopping and slashing, blinding each other with squirts of blood and pellets of human flesh. And as they appeared and disappeared in the moving wreaths of fiery smoke, they lost more and more of their original shape, becoming, in that fitful light, terrible uncertain forms, armless, legless, recognizable for human only by their irreproachable Heads, which they carried stiff and high even while crawling and staggering along, lying in wait, and leaping and rearing and butting as do fighting animals ; until they became, with those decorous, well-groomed Heads, mere unspeakable hybrids between man and beast : they who had come on to that stage so erect and beautiful. For the Ballet of the Nations, when Satan gets it up regardless of expense, is an unsurpassed spectacle of transformations such as must be witnessed to be believed in. Thus on they danced their stranger and stranger antics.

*The voice of HEROISM, after singing bars of Tipperary and other songs, is heard singing with great solemnity Haydn's "Gott erhalte unsern Kaiser." Its hymn-like melody gradually changes into part of a psalm, "Stand up, O*

*Lord God of Hosts, thou God of our Fathers. Through Thee will we overthrow our enemies, in Thy Name will we tread them under that rise up against us."*

THE MUSE. And as they appeared by turns in that chaos of flame and darkness, each of those Dancing Nations kept invoking Satan, crying to him, "Help me, my own dear Lord;" but they called him by Another Name. And Satan, that creative connoisseur, rejoiced in his work of waste and saw that it was perfect (*puts the tablets into the bosom of her robe*).

SATAN (*in the position again of the Michelangelo Duke as in the prologue, propping his chin on his hand, but with his eyes fixed upon the stage, speaks meditatively to himself*). Dear Creatures, how they worship me. It is deeply gratifying to my pride in wastefulness. True, they mistake my name, but they love my real self, and the success of my long career has taught me the use of aliases. (*To the MUSE.*) How true it is, dear Muse of History, that the chief function of the Sublime in art or nature is to awaken man's slumbering intuition that there is, after all, a Power transcending his ephemeral life, and quite indifferent to his trumpery happiness. That is one reason why I prefer the Ballet of the Nations to any of the other mystery-plays, Earthquake, Pestilence, Shipwreck and so forth, which Death puts on our stage from time to time. The music is not always pretty: at once too ultra-modern and too archaic for Philistine ears. And, despite the classic genius of my Ballet Master, and the sensational suggestions of our new friends, Organization and Science, the steps of the Dance lack variety. But what a scope this Ballet gives for moral beauty, and how it revives religious feeling in its genuine polytheism! I grant you the Heads of the Nations are somewhat hard-featured. But the *Bodies* of the Nations are always sound and virginal; and what concerns me most, their *heart* is always in the right place. So for true sublimity, give me, I always say,

one of Death's Dances danced by Nations each with its heart in the right place and faithfully obedient to whatever Head may happen to be on its shoulders.

THE MUSE (*pulling out her tablets resumes writing*). So the Ballet proceeded ; but for this to continue it was necessary to keep up the music of that Orchestra of Passions which sat, in the enclosure marked "Patriotism," around the slippery and reeking stage : Jealousy, Greed, Loyalty, Chivalry, Comradeship, Reverence, Discipline, Routine ; Ennui and Egotism ; Justice, Prejudice with Pugnacity and Bullying ; Widow Fear with her nimble children, Suspicion and Panic, playing on penny whistles, fog-horns and that mediaeval tocsin-bell in its wrapper of newspapers ; Idealism and Adventure, that splendid pair blowing their silver trumpet and woodland horn ; Hatred, who never ceased tuning up at the harmonium of Self-Righteousness ; Sin, whom the Wise Gods call Disease, and her classic crew, Rapine, Lust and Murder, with their bull-roarers and rattles ; Science and Organization seated a little apart, for none of their old established allegoric companions could bear their new-fangled instruments, but whose gramophone and pianola brayed and strummed away unflaggingly, when all the other musicians showed signs of weariness, and only Heroism, a smile in his clear blind eyes, found ever fresh breath and ever more jubilant notes. The rest of the band was beginning to flag, either because the Passions, as is notorious, are lacking in endurance, or because they had fuddled themselves with the strong liquor which was unceasingly handed round by Satan's lackeys of the Press and Pulpit. The less noble ones were coming in a little at random, Suspicion and Panic, notably, screaming at the Heads of the Nations, and Fear, poor slut, being seized with delirium tremens. None of all this was noticed by the Dancers ; yet they began to dance a little less fiercely, and fell to mistaking their *vis-a-vis* for partners and vice versa, to the despair of the Ballet.

Master, who wheeled from side to side at his desk, hitting the somnolent Passions of the orchestra resounding whacks, and cracking his fleshless joints like castanets.

Now Satan began to fear that the performance might dribble out untimely, for except the voice of Heroism and the mechanical instruments of Science and Organization, the sounds were feeble and intermittent, and the Nations were beginning to halt and stumble, and even to curtsy to each other as if the end might be at hand.

SATAN (*to himself*). This will never do. Why, we haven't yet come to the figure of Famine and Insurrection. There yet remain several generations of young lads waiting for slaughter and an endless stock of Virtue to be wasted. Hi! Rapine, Murder and Lust, dear nimble followers of Sin, come to my help, and fetch me two new players from out of that audience of Sleepy Virtues!

THE MUSE (*declaiming very slowly as she writes*). Sleepy indeed they were, and some, like Wisdom, Equanimity and Temperance, but especially Truthfulness, had long since fallen into consoling dreams, after closing their eyes and bunging up their ears against sights and sounds offensive to their principles, but which they had not grit enough to interrupt. But among the Virtues two were not asleep, and sat motionless under the spell of hideous fascination, their eyes fixed, their hearing intent with horror almost pleasant in its excess. These two were called Pity and Indignation, sister and brother of divinest breed ; she was like waters under moonlight and as gentle, murmuring and lovely, and also, like such waters, dangerous in her innocence ; the other golden and vivid as flame, and, like flame, tipped with terrible scarlet, purifying but devastating.

To them, who were fascinated with horror before that dance, there sprang at Satan's bidding, Rapine, Murder and Lust, the crew of Death's Mother-Paramour Sin, whom the Gods call Disease in their wisdom ; and straightway that noble pair of

twins, Pity and Indignation, responded to the hideous summons. Hand in hand they leaped from among the Sleeping Virtues, and flew, on rushing pinions, into the midst of Satan's orchestra. Fear and her Brood fell back ; Idealism and Adventure, well-nigh spent with breathless blowing of their silver trumpet and hunting horn, made room eagerly. Heroism, that blind, smiling young giant, recognized at once Pity's delicious healing breath and Indignation's fiery blast ; he shook himself, and, with renewed vigour, his godlike youthful voice sung out words which no one could distinguish but all the world understood. And Sin with her crew fell at the new-comers' feet and fawned upon them.

Even before either of that immortal pair had uttered a sound, the flagging Dancers, the bleeding Nations, weary of that stage slippery with blood and entrails, felt the wind of the wings of Pity and Indignation, and in its pure breath suddenly revived.

The holy pair required no instruments. Pity merely sobbed, and her sobs were like the welling-up notes of many harps, drowning the soul in tender madness. But Indignation hissed and roared like a burning granary when the sparks crackle as they fly into the ripe, standing harvest, and the flames wave scores of feet high in the blast of their own making.

SATAN (*intent and meditative ; thoughtfully to himself*). This is the supreme sacrifice to me ; I am the Waster of all kinds of Virtue.

DEATH (*with a gesture of adoring rapture towards SATAN*). Now nothing can stop the dancing, and this shall yet be the greatest triumph of Ballet Master Death ! (*Raps on his desk*) Ladies and Gentlemen, dear simple and valiant Nations of my Corps de Ballet, we will now proceed to the third and last figure of our Dance ; it is called : "Duty to our children ; Loyalty to our dead."

SATAN (*bows benignly towards DEATH*). You might have trusted Satan, dear Ballet Master Death! Pity and Indignation can renew Death's Dance when all the Nations have danced themselves to stumps, and the ordinary band, save perhaps Widow Fear and her children, can fiddle and blow no longer. (*He raises himself slightly in his seat, radiantly attentive, lifting one hand imperceptively as in benediction, and repeating low to himself.*) I am the Waster of all kinds of Virtue.

*The AGES-TO-COME burst into frantic applause, crying  
“Encore, Encore.”*

THE MUSE (*holding her stylus and tablets, bows to SATAN and says in a clear quiet voice*). And thus the Ballet of the Nations is still a-dancing.

END OF PART II.

*Author's Note for Stage Managers (other than Satan).*

In the event of this play being performed, it is the author's imperative wish that no attempt be made at showing the Dancing of the Nations. The stage upon the stage must be turned in such a manner that nothing beyond the footlights, the Orchestra and auditorium shall be visible to the real spectators, only the changing illumination which accompanies the Ballet making its performance apparent. Similarly, in accordance with Satan's remarks on p. 49, none of the music must be audible, except the voice and drum of Heroism. Anything beyond this would necessarily be hideous, besides drowning or interrupting the dialogue.



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PART III  
EPILOGUE

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DEDICATED TO ARTHUR PONSONBY.



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## EPILOGUE

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*“Mors Stupebit.”*

SCENE : *No Place, Nowhere.* *The Theatre, the light full on the inscription of the architrave, “The World, a Theatre of Varieties ; Lessee and Manager, SATAN,” is seen from its topmost steps, completely open, so that the stage, stalls, and orchestra are visible, somewhat foreshortened. The drop curtain is down ; and in front of it HEROISM is lying on the ground asleep, with BALLET MASTER DEATH lying across him, dead drunk, his skull propped up on HEROISM’s chest. WIDOW FEAR and her children SUSPICION and PANIC are cautiously treading on tiptoe, consulting in whispers, startled as if by ghosts in corners, hesitating whether and how to go away. The last of the other PASSIONS are collecting their instruments in the Orchestra. PITY, INDIGNATION, IDEALISM, and ADVENTURE have vanished. The SLEEPY VIRTUES in the stalls wake up and rub their eyes preliminary to departing, PRUDENCE, TEMPERANCE, FAIRNESS, and TRUTHFULNESS exchanging horrified remarks.*

1<sup>ST</sup> SLEEPY VIRTUE. What a hideous dream!

2<sup>ND</sup> SLEEPY VIRTUE. I have had a nightmarè!

3<sup>RD</sup> AND 4<sup>TH</sup> SLEEPY VIRTUES. So have I—and I.

5<sup>TH</sup> SLEEPY VIRTUE. We must have been eating some forbidden apples of knowledge!

6<sup>TH</sup> SLEEPY VIRTUE. Or else all that poetry and eloquence fuddled us.

ALL. Well, thank heaven, we’re broad awake now, and can get out of this odious low-class booth.

*The SLEEPY VIRTUES begin groping their way out of the half-darkness. SATAN steps forward, unfolds his wings, revealing himself in the black effulgence of his archangelic armour to the MUSE OF HISTORY and the AGES-TO-COME, who remain alone with him in the Orchestra. SATAN begins to switch off the last lights.*

SATAN. Alas! even the longest performance must come to an end!

THE MUSE. The longest and the most *réussi*, my dear Lord Satan! But before we disperse, allow me to express the deepest appreciation and gratitude on the part of the Ages-to-Come and my unworthy self. The remembrance of your matchless *Ballet of the Nations* will be a frequent solace, I feel certain, in our usual humdrum existence.

CHORUS OF AGES-TO-COME. Yes, indeed. (2) That it will. (3) One does need something great and heroic in order to pull through the dreary days of peace and remind one of Man's higher possibilities. (*Tutti.*) Our heartfelt thanks to your Lordship.

*The AGES-TO-COME go up to SATAN, curtsy and bob, and are revealed to be, not the classic veiled figures they had previously appeared, but old ladies with long eyeglasses, and old gentlemen, dignitaries in lank black coats and spats and half-pay colonels with white moustaches, all carrying lending-library volumes of memoirs under their arms, alongside of their tucked-up Grecian draperies.*

SATAN (with his hand, now seen to be slightly clawed, on the last electric switch). *Pas de quoi*, dear friends! The pleasure has all been on my side, and I must thank you for so much intelligent indulgence. *Au revoir*, ladies and gentlemen. And to our next merry meeting, dear old Muse of History. As I have often said: What should you and I do without one another, I wonder? But I was forgetting; I must close up the green room.

THE MUSE (*more than ever like a huge pouter-pigeon prima donna in her tightly drawn draperies with large key pattern, rolls out in her usual luscious contralto, but with ill-concealed inquisitiveness*). Your green room? I never thought of that. Of course! Every theatre must have a green room. How deeply interesting! How . . .

SATAN (*looks the MUSE long in the face and laughs*). Well, what would you give your old playmate Satan if he were to admit you to an additional little spectacle? To show you a mystery?

THE MUSE. O Satan dearest!

CHORUS OF AGES-TO-COME. A mystery, my Lord? Oh, we do so love mysteries. Is it Eleusinian? or like the Iron Mask? or the Chevalier d'Eon?

THE MUSE. Is it . . . well, how shall I put it? Is it *very scabreux*?

SATAN (*laughing*). Oh, not in the least. I fear you will be horribly disappointed. It is to the last degree respectable. However, as you have been so very kind to my poor Ballet, it may interest you to see what was passing behind the stage. I must explain that, in view of future dramatic possibilities, I never omit to have everything that comes in my way adequately cinematographed and gramophoned. Besides, these records help to amuse my solitary leisure.

SATAN presses a button with a long clanging ring. The curtain rises. SATAN helps the MUSE OF HISTORY on to the empty stage, where, as already described, HEROISM is lying nearest the footlights, motionless, with BALLET MASTER DEATH asleep propped up on him, snoring. The end of the stage is closed by a brilliantly lit magic-lantern screen, blank. On the table is the cinematograph apparatus. On another a large gramophone of the sort marked "His Master's Voice."

THE MUSE (*bursting with delighted expectancy*). How mar-

vellous! How trooly magical! This is indeed the highest privilege your friendship has ever granted me! The hidden enigmas underlying your *Ballet of the Nations!* The *dessous des cartes*, as French orators say! The Immortals at their work! For that, I take it, is the meaning of the mysterious inscription on your wonder-working machine! *Quidquid delirant reges plectuntur Achivi*, is it not? Or, in more modern language, that the million-headed crowd exists only to carry out the will of a half-dozen Supermen.

SATAN. It is as you say, dear much-experienced Recorder of the World's Calamities. What you are going to see and hear are indeed Supermen; say, rather, the mortal Gods in my little machine of myriad-fold death and ruin. In other words, the Heads of the Nations. For it can scarcely have escaped your acumen that what passed muster for such during my Ballet, and rolled about on the shoulders of the Dancing Nations, could be only cardboard masks. These are the Real Ones, the Masters of Men's Destiny, even if not always of royal birth or Cabinet rank; sometimes mere humble specimens of the Investor, the *Homo Economicus* who sways the modern world.

*The MUSE clasps her hands and wags her head in delight too deep for words; the AGES-TO-COME nudge one another.*

*SATAN switches the current on to the cinematograph and gramophone, which work in concert after a preliminary wheeze and clatter and a corresponding flicker and blur.*

THE MUSE (*after a sigh of delight*). The real Reality! How thrilling! How trooly . . .

*Views of buildings, rather out of perspective, jerk across the screen. People come in and out, presenting more of their boot-soles than one usually sees; and voices gabble nasally on the gramophone. However, as the double apparatus, and also the attention of the spectators, work more steadily, we become aware of a succession, brief but clear, of interiors: public offices, newspaper sanctums, embassy*

reception-rooms, sometimes even quite humble private houses; also committee tables and banqueting tables, with people discussing or speechifying; lobbies in various countries, club-rooms and Houses of Parliament and Senates in different parts of the globe. They are full of figures in groups of twos and threes, going in and out, sometimes arm-in-arm, standing in front of fireplaces or before drinking-bars, or else dictating at office-desks. Most frequently, perhaps, dining and playing bridge, and almost always smoking. These figures are mainly masculine, elderly, often bald, and not always very dignified; some in uniform, some in plain clothes. They are very busy doing nothing in particular. Similarly, they talk a great deal, with significant pauses and interruptions, but all they say is entirely allusive and disjointed, referring to something else which we have not heard, and tailing off into something we do not hear. The action, if it may be called action, like the talking, is a perpetual shuffle from place to place and topic to topic. One can see occasional significant gestures accompanied by insignificant words. But the main impression is of sentences like "Well, yes," "I always said as much," "To be sure," "Bien entendu," "Something may have to be done," "Things seem to be coming to a head," "We shall have to decide"; the whole being interspersed with a good deal of very friendly laughter. The MUSE and AGES-TO-COME slowly pass from excitement to mystification, then boredom and ill-concealed disappointment.

THE MUSE. Ah! Ah, indeed—ah, I see. Just so! Exactly!

These exclamations, fewer and further between, are the MUSE's answer to occasional isolated words like "Balance of Power," "Two keels to one," "Budget," "Loan," "Concessions," "Open door," "Railways," "Conscription," "Morocco," "Persia," "Baghdad," "Money

*markets*”; none of which words, however, lead to anything intelligible. Gradually the MUSE gets to look horribly depressed, then angry, much to the amusement of SATAN, who is watching her face. He suddenly switches off the current; the gramophone wheezes, the screen becomes blank. Like a person at a concert, the MUSE snatches this opportunity to turn round, draw her draperies over her head, and say :

THE MUSE. Quite so, I understand. Most remarkable, I’m sure. Thank you, dear Lord Satan. But I fear the Ages-to-Come and I must now be saying good-bye and going on.

*The MUSE extends her hand very frigidly.*

SATAN. Oh, don’t go away, dear Clio. You know you have no other engagement, and are merely bored. There now, don’t protest, my dear old friend. I warned you it would be horribly bourgeois. I ought also to have warned you . . . But, forgive me, dearest Muse, I couldn’t resist the temptation of trying a little experiment upon you and your friends.

THE MUSE (*furious and dignified*). An experiment on *me*? You . . . have ventured to play a practical joke on the Ages-to-Come and *me*? I might have guessed as much, if I had not had too much belief in your good breeding, my Lord. Of course, it was evident that all this tosh had nothing to do with the *Ballet of the Nations*. But I never could have believed this was Satan’s notion of a joke!

SATAN. It is not a joke. What you have seen and heard is the most serious thing in the Universe. It is *Reality*. Only you couldn’t recognize it.

THE MUSE. I have had enough of your jests, my Lord. It is enough you should have ventured to bore me with this point-less stuff—all about nothing at all; absolutely devoid of meaning.

SATAN (*gravely*). Yet the outcome of it was my *Ballet of the*

*Nations.* Allow me to tell you, dear old Clio, that the meaning discernible in Reality depends upon the eye and mind of him who witnesses and hears it. And when Reality happens to be a fragment so vast, wide-spreading and intricate, and of such long duration as the preliminaries of my Ballet, it needs, perchance, an eye accustomed to Eternities to take in the connections and put two and two together. To you, who are a kind of artist, it means nothing ; since you, dear Clio, take no interest in the slow accumulation of cause and effect which is called Fate. The world's microscopic building by the heaping up of corpse on corpse of limestone-insects in the ocean depths, and their ages-long upheaval into Alpine ranges, is nothing to you. And similarly with men's affairs. Why, even my Ballet, as I heard you recording it, was not the real thing, though you thought it was. *That* catastrophe was long indeed, horrible, hideous, wonderful, heroic, more than you guessed ; and far more really dramatic than all the fireworks and antics you eloquently described. But it was also frivolous in part, and eminently boring. Reality is boring, nine-tenths of it, and therefore unrecorded. I own I wanted to try how much you might be able to discern ; that wasn't fair on an old friend, perhaps. Forgive me, therefore ; and to make amends for thus abusing your patience on false pretences, let me manipulate Reality so that you can take it in. Look ! I will change the gearing of my magic apparatus ; make the recorded acts and words, which were scattered, interrupted, or too long drawn out, gather up into scenes intelligible to a distinguished critic of the drama like you. I will precipitate the action, omit details, isolate essentials, typify the gestures, and parody the words. I will, to please you, transform Reality, which seems to have no point, into bare Caricature, which has. Here is a little selection from pre-war years. Look, Clio, and listen !

SATAN begins taking discs out of a drawer and inserts one into the gramophone. He continues pulling out and putting in discs all through the performance.

SATAN. Now, my dear Muse of History, we will begin with a little selection of scenes leading up to my Ballet. I am really ashamed that the emptiness of my poor green room should oblige you and your appreciative friends to remain standing. But you will see and hear only the better.

*The cinema picture steadies itself into a newspaper office, with two men at a table. One, rather vulgar and unkempt, pours out a brandy and soda for the other, who is very well groomed and well mannered.*

1<sup>ST</sup> Voice (*vulgar and jocular*). Of course, one doesn't expect you official gentlemen ever to know what concerns them. What's that old definition of a diplomat, eh ? *Jamais rien vu, jamais rien su, jamais rien pu...* So I won't waste my valuable time in making you guess what your principal ally is engaged in doing at this particular present moment.

2<sup>ND</sup> VOICE (*well-bred, hesitating*). My principal ally . . . you mean . . . ?

1<sup>ST</sup> VOICE. Yes, my good man, *your* principal ally—your dear, devoted ally.

2<sup>ND</sup> VOICE. Well, and what *is* he doing ?

1<sup>ST</sup> VOICE. Doing ? Doing behind your back, or rather under your nose ! Why, *he's busy burying the hatchet* with the other chaps. What do you say to that, eh ?

2<sup>ND</sup> VOICE. Do you mean those people of Ogresland ? Good heavens, that can never happen ! You *must* be misinformed, my dear Editor.

1<sup>ST</sup> VOICE. I tell you it's happening at this very moment. He's going to open his money market to them. *Now* will you believe ? "*Peace all round, or the European happy family.*" That's what's being arranged behind your back. Perhaps that will suit your policy, eh ? Only please remember, my good fellow, that if you suddenly discover that the Balance of Power has gone to pot, it won't have been *my* fault !

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2<sup>ND</sup> VOICE (*more than ever well-bred*). Good heavens! Good heavens! . . . You must have been misinformed.

*The gramophone wheezes ; SATAN changes the disc. The cinema shows a bourgeois house in the French provinces. A table covered with oilcloth ; a father and son having lunch, napkins in their buttonholes ; also mother.*

SON. But, *mon père*, if you are so sure that the Alsatians are dying to be reunited to us, it is surely your duty to fight for their liberation ?

FATHER. Fight! *Parlez-en à votre aise, mon petit.* You weren't there in 1870 ; I was.

SON. Yes, and you fought to defend Paris against the Reactionaries—you were a Communard, thank heaven!

MOTHER. There's no need to rake up that. That's what comes of your frequenting those horrible Socialists—all atheists, as M. l'Abbé tells me.

FATHER. The Commune ? One fights for liberty when one is a boy, and for order and property when one's a father.

SON. And one arranges to fight for order and property against the Russian people, I suppose, when they implore one not to side with their tyrants and lend them money.

FATHER. What tyrants ? The Tsar is our ally. And if we ever get back Alsace, *sacre bleu !* it'll be thanks to him.

SON. I thought you just now said you wouldn't fight to liberate Alsace ?

FATHER. No, more I would. But if someone else were to fight those dirty Germans, we should get it back.

SON. And for that you are lending money to the Tsar, who treats his own subjects, let alone Poles and Finns, a thousand times worse than the dirty Germans treat Alsace.

FATHER. My son, my money is mine, and I am the sole judge how to invest it. And when you come to my age you

will thank me for being a reasonable and peace-loving man, not a *cervelle brûlée* thinking of Russians and Poles, and Alsatians with their ridiculous accent.

**Son.** Then why not bury the hatchet and leave the Alsatians to settle with Germany?

**FATHER.** My son, I am ashamed of you! But I know that is only the pacifist rubbish you learn at Socialist meetings, and in the absurd rags of fellows like Jaurès and Sembat. *Sapristi!* Is one or is one not French, I wonder? So never let me hear a word against Russians or the Russian loan, which is guaranteed, practically, by our Government.

*The gramophone wheezes and the screen becomes blank. SATAN changes the disc. The cinema shows the committee-room of an International Armament Trust; directors, some of them visibly ex-military and ex-naval officers, speaking with various foreign accents.*

**CHAIRMAN.** I regret extremely having to tell you, my dear Rear-Admiral, that this Board has not re-elected you for the coming year. The fact is that ever since your last daughter made such a very good marriage, it has seemed to us that you no longer display the usual energy in dealing with your former naval colleagues.

**Ex-REAR-ADMIRAL** (*stiffening himself*). Sir, allow me to tell this Committee quite plainly that what you refer to has no sort of connection with my daughter's marriage. What you asked of me about obtaining that those ships, built only five years ago, should be scrapped, is a thing I could not honourably undertake. There is a limit to what an honest man can do. Those ships were perfectly up-to-date, in my opinion.

**A DIRECTOR** (*German accent*). You forget that unless they were scrapped and new ones ordered it became extremely difficult for me to insist on my ex-naval colleagues in OGRELAND ordering new ships. There was nothing on which to base an agitation in my country.

CHAIRMAN. Let me assure you, my dear Admiral, that our Committee is most grateful for your past services; and, of course, now all your daughters are so well married and you are yourself a widower, you must evidently please yourself in such matters.

EX-REAR-ADMIRAL. Oh, but . . . the fact is . . . I'm going to marry again.

CHAIRMAN. In that case I have no doubt this Committee will be delighted to re-elect so valuable a member a couple of years hence.

(*Exit Ex-Rear-Admiral.*)

CHAIRMAN. And now we had better take this opportunity of examining the expenses of the last mission to Great Bearland and the Far East. General, I regret to express this Board's surprise at the magnitude of the sums which you have spent in this work.

EX-GENERAL (*Russian accent*). What, you insinuate . . .

CHAIRMAN. We insinuate nothing. We merely point to the bill presented for your working expenses.

EX-GENERAL. Gentlemen, I can assure you—*je vous jure parole d'honneur*—that I am seriously out of pocket on that transaction. The Prime Minister suddenly doubled his claims when he understood how much we required the concession for those new steelworks in my country. He went so far as to threaten to hint to the Government of Ogresqland that it was all bluff, and that they needn't set up similar additional works in reply. He had the knife at our throats. Hardly had I settled with him—and most satisfactorily, you will agree—when up came two Grand Dukes wanting loans, and the Archimandrite Simeon, who has the Monarch's ear, and was horribly insistent. Indeed, I still have to deliver a diamond *rivière* I had to promise to a lady very influential in all armament matters. *Parole d'honneur*, I am a ruined man if you dismiss me, and a ruined man may become a desperate one.

CHAIRMAN. We will look once more into your business, be assured, General. Let us pass on.

LEVANTINE DIRECTOR. Have you remarked, gentlemen, that those Socialist ruffians have again proposed at their International Congress to bring pressure on the various Governments to nationalize all armament industries?

FRENCH DIRECTOR. The chief Socialist leaders shall be given subordinate seats in their respective Ministries. We know how to deal with Socialists and turn them into first-class patriots, don't we?

GERMAN DIRECTOR. Perhaps in your country. In my view, we want a good European war to break up these precious pacifists, and put the rest of them in prison.

ENGLISH DIRECTOR. All very fine, but I'm not convinced that actual war is really to our advantage; it would, of course, represent a rapid momentary turnover of capital. But if it lasted too long it might result in universal bankruptcy and disarmament.

FRENCH DIRECTOR. Bah! The victor would always have to arm against the vanquished, and a nation is never too bankrupt for that.

AMERICAN DIRECTOR. I agree that, on the whole, and so long as we keep on changing the fashion sufficiently often and making these nations compete sufficiently, armed peace is really more to our advantage.

CHAIRMAN. Besides, it will, of course, lead to war in a natural and thoroughgoing way. So I am for armed peace . . .

*The gramophone wheezes. SATAN inserts a disc. The cinema shows breakfast at a vicarage.*

VICAR'S MOTHER. My dear boy, don't ask me to invest in the "Small Arms and High Explosives Ltd." instead of the "Canadian Apple Growers." You see, I love apples, and I can't bear war.

VICAR. But, mother dear, armaments prevent war.

MOTHER. Still, you can't say all those bayonets and shells aren't meant to kill men.

VICAR. I am a priest ; nobody can kill *me*.

MOTHER. No, thank God! But all men aren't priests, and all men are mothers' sons, and they may be killed if we keep paying people to make these horrid things.

VICAR. Well, mother dear, do you suppose the Bishop hasn't thought all that out ? He's got ever so many shares. And, then, there is the Archdeacon.

MOTHER. The Archdeacon—that saint ! Are you *sure* ?

VICAR. It's he who sent me the prospectus. He's got all his money in it.

MOTHER. Well, dear boy, I suppose—if it's good enough for the Archdeacon. (*She sighs.*) One mustn't be self-righteous, I suppose. Of course, I should have preferred the apples . . .

VICAR. You shall buy tons of Canadian apples out of your High Explosives dividends, mother!

*The gramophone wheezes and the screen becomes blank.*

*SATAN changes the disc. The cinema now represents an absurdly furnished drawing-room in a modern hotel. Two elderly gentlemen smoking cigars on a divan.*

1<sup>ST</sup> VOICE. There is nothing in the world my country and Government would like better than European peace based upon our friendship.

2<sup>ND</sup> VOICE. A friendship between us and European peace based upon it is the greatest desideratum of my Government and country.

1<sup>ST</sup> VOICE. But, then, you have allies . . .

2<sup>ND</sup> VOICE. But, then, you have an *entente* . . .

1ST VOICE. Oh, never for purposes of aggression.

2ND VOICE. Oh, only for purposes of self-defence.

1ST VOICE. What is aggression?

2ND VOICE. What is self-defence?

1ST VOICE. What is an alliance?

2ND VOICE. What is an *entente*?

1ST VOICE. Ah, my dear Excellency, you are well aware that, as philosophers tell us, there are many important things, like Truth, Beauty, Goodness, which no man can define, but all men can recognize. Who, for instance, shall give us a precise definition of what constitutes a *muddle*? Yet it may happen to all of us to find ourselves in one.

*The gramophone wheezes. SATAN changes the disc. The cinema represents the deck of a yacht. The same two elderly gentlemen are walking up and down in appropriate garments, smoking cigarettes.*

1ST VOICE. I think I may say that my Government and country would be delighted to hand over to you the chief harbours belonging to the Queen of Sheba.

2ND VOICE. I feel convinced that my Government and country would make no difficulties about your Protectorate of North Xanadu.

1ST VOICE. I think I am expressing the cordial pleasure with which both countries would divide up the regions of the River Alph.

2ND VOICE. In fact, nothing could be more remarkable than the way in which the interests of both countries coincide.

1ST VOICE. All my Government and country would ask is an assurance that you cease increasing your Navy for the next ten years from now.

2ND VOICE. Oh, but my Government has just undertaken to increase its Navy during a period of ten years.

1<sup>ST</sup> VOICE. Then we shall have to build three keels to your one.

2<sup>ND</sup> VOICE. Then we shall have to demand a new military credit.

*A slight pause. They walk the length of the deck.*

1<sup>ST</sup> VOICE. How delightful it is to realize that your Excellency is a countryman of the illustrious thinker who wrote the first *Treatise on Perpetual Peace*!

2<sup>ND</sup> VOICE. I cannot tell you, Excellency, how eagerly I am looking forward to your elucidation of Hegel's principle of Universal Reconciliation.

1<sup>ST</sup> VOICE. Ah, yes, Hegel's *Versöhnung*, the Reconciliation of Contradictions. That is at the bottom of philosophy, to my humble thinking.

2<sup>ND</sup> VOICE. The Reconciliation of Contradictions as the guiding principle in history! What a depth in that notion! Which reminds me: Does your Government happen to have any engagements besides those we are aware of?

1<sup>ST</sup> VOICE. That depends upon what you are aware of; but surely your Excellency must be aware of everything that is in the least degree interesting. Yes, yes! *Versöhnung*! What a wonderful principle! *Versöhn* . . .

*The gramophone wheezes. The screen becomes blank.*

SATAN inserts another disc. The cinema shows the interior of a sugar refinery in foreign parts; through the window a group of tall chimneys are belching black smoke into a withered pine and a mediæval belfry. The place is flagged and garlanded, and a brass band is braying at the foot of a staircase among a crowd of sickly and ragged workpeople. This is in honour of a Minister who has been visiting the factory in company with several manufacturers in close-buttoned frockcoats, with lavender kid gloves stuck in the breast; also a General covered with gold, a prelate with

*purple buttons down his front, and a professor in spectacles, manuscript bulging his pockets. On a table, along with cigars, is a tray of thick sandwiches and tall glasses of a steaming beverage.*

THE MINISTER (*while the band plays downstairs*). Let me congratulate you on the excellence of your punch. It gives a most favourable impression of your sugar, my dear Baron. May I examine a lump? (*Takes one from the sugar-basin and examines it carefully through his eyeglass.*) Ha! beautifully crystalline—a credit to our country!

1ST MANUFACTURER. No, Excellency, this really is cane-sugar, *not* beetroot, as better suited for punch. . . . Our own sugar, owing to the chemical properties of our soil, is rather deficient . . . I mean, it has none of that cloying sweetness which obliges one to use cane-sugar with so much discretion for ordinary purposes.

THE MINISTER. Ah! I quite understand. (*Raises his glass.*) I drink to our beetroot-sugar industry, which, thanks to the wonderful commercial genius of this distinguished syndicate—and, I may add, the fostering care of an enlightened Government, which knows how to temper theoretical Free Trade with practical Protection—has filled this once sylvan district with tall chimneys and given work in abundance—I am told wages rise to fourteen shillings weekly in good years—to thousands of industrious families who were languishing in the monotony of a corn-grower's life.

*Everyone bows and clinks glasses. At a sign of the chief manufacturer the crowd shouts "Long live our illustrious Minister of Agriculture and Commerce!" and disperses. The gentlemen, after much bowing, take seats and go on drinking and smoking huge cigars.*

1ST MANUFACTURER. Well, my dear Minister, you have now seen the miracles which beetroot-sugar has accomplished;

the desert, as the Prophet says, has blossomed like a rose! (*He waves towards the chimneys, which are emitting a very sickening smoke.* Everyone claps.) Well, what my fellow-directors and myself beg you now to say to our Government is that all this splendid progress is threatened by a very serious deficit which is staring our shareholders in the face. Fostered by wise Government measures which protected our infant manufacture from alien competition, our beet-sugar industry has attracted so much capital and labour that we have increased our plant and production, and now find ourselves with vast quantities of sugar which the country, I grieve to say, refuses to absorb with the celerity needed for our dividends. . . .

ANOTHER MANUFACTURER. What our illustrious Baron says applies almost exactly to the steel industry, which has developed so miraculously, considering our country's total lack of coal and iron.

ANOTHER MANUFACTURER. The cotton industry is not in quite so bad a way yet, but the high prices at which, thanks to wise Governmental fostering, we have been able to sell our wares by the exclusion of foreign ones, is resulting in a remarkable contraction of the demand. People are going about in rags, as your Excellency doubtless notices.

THE MINISTER (*getting uncomfortable*). Well, my dear Baron—for a grateful country honours you by the title of Baron of Sugar, Baron of Steel, and Baron of Cotton—why not sell outside the country?

*The Manufacturers look at each other aghast.*

1ST MANUFACTURER. But sugar is only a quarter the price in other countries. Our climate is unfavourable.

2ND MANUFACTURER. But I had explained that we have neither iron nor coal, and that a spade or scythe costs four times as much in our country as abroad.

3RD MANUFACTURER. You can get six English cotton shirts for the price of one of ours!

THE MINISTER. In that case, I really don't see what I can do for you!

1ST MANUFACTURER (*solemnly*). Sir, this illustrious geographer here will inform you that there exist, not very far from our seas and in close contact with some of those Colonies which spread our civilization, a Nation of Negroes . . .

PROFESSOR (*bows and pulls MS. out of his pocket*). Negroes now subjects of the Queen of Sheba, but whom monolithic monuments there show to have been under the influence of our ancestors of the later Stone Age ; moreover, pronouncedly Brachycephalous and . . .

1ST MANUFACTURER (*pushes the PROFESSOR aside*). Quite so, quite so. Our illustrious geographer was going to add that these negroes . . .

PROFESSOR. . . . Brachycephalous, please remember, and possessing monolithic monuments . . .

1ST MANUFACTURER. . . . Already consume many thousand tons of cane-sugar from the West Indies . . .

2ND MANUFACTURER. . . . Import a considerable supply of steel and iron implements from England . . .

3RD MANUFACTURER. . . . Clothe themselves, however scantily, in cotton goods from India . . .

THE MINISTER. Ah!

1ST MANUFACTURER. Well, sir, these negroes . . .

PROFESSOR. . . . Distinctly Brachycephalous, and connected with our ancestors by these monolithic monuments . . .

1ST MANUFACTURER. . . . These negroes must be made to eat, or at least buy, *our* sugar.

2ND MANUFACTURER. They must use *our* iron and steel implements, and, if possible, *our* steel rails.

3RD MANUFACTURER. They must clothe themselves, so far as the climate allows of any clothing, in *our* cotton goods.

THE MINISTER. Do you expect me to order your Brachy... negroes to transfer their custom to you?

PROFESSOR. Allow me to answer his Excellency. These negroes, being, as I said, Brachycephalous and closely connected by their monuments with our own earliest civilization, are ardently desirous of being reunited to our ancient—I might say primæval—Empire.

1ST MANUFACTURER. And once this desire is fulfilled, they will naturally benefit by all the progress we have since achieved. They will participate in our administration and be shielded by our laws; and, of course, our beneficent system of commercial and industrial protection . . .

GENERAL. They will enrol themselves, or be conscripted, enthusiastically under our victorious banners, and form a contingent the more important that their birth-rate runs to thirty or forty children apiece.

PRELATE. They will abandon their idolatry and embrace our pure and peaceful religion, abjuring the slave trade.

THE MINISTER. But what you propose means a war of annexation; and besides the Queen of Sheba, who at present owns these negroes, I am informed that every other nation, except the one which already supplies them with necessaries under a mistaken Free Trade regime, has earmarked them similarly for annexation.

GENERAL. But we can conquer them with next to no expense or loss of time from our Colonies.

PRELATE. But the Barefooted Friars have already bought immense tracts of land among them for their missionary schools, and our pious Clerical Banks have mortgaged other vast tracts from their chiefs.

THE MINISTER. But all this will embroil us with our neighbours. . . . It means new alliances, increased armaments. It may end in a European war . . .

PROFESSOR. . . . Unless, Excellency, it be made to coincide with a European war . . .

GENERAL. It is the simplest way of enlarging our military effectives without raising our own conscription to five years.

PRELATE. It is the simplest way of giving additional souls to Christ.

1ST MANUFACTURER. It is the only way to save the beet-root-sugar industry.

2ND MANUFACTURER. And the iron and steel industry.

3RD MANUFACTURER. And the cotton industry.

THE MINISTER. Not so fast! It isn't my business, you know. I am a man of peace! I can only undertake to lay your suggestions before my colleagues in some future Cabinet Council.

PROFESSOR. Pray remember, Excellency, that these negroes are Brachycephalous, and that their monolithic monuments proclaim them to have originally belonged, if not to our race, at all events to our Stone Age culture.

1ST MANUFACTURER. It may be more to the point if your Excellency will lay before your colleagues of the Cabinet that, not only our shareholders have votes, but, thanks to the progress of democracy in our enlightened country, every one of our thousands of operatives enjoys the same privilege. And if our industries, and especially our sugar industry . . .

2ND MANUFACTURER. . . . And our steel industry . . .

3RD MANUFACTURER. . . . And our cotton industry . . .

1ST MANUFACTURER. . . . Are not provided with a new débouché protected by our flag from alien competition, why, all those millions of votes will go to the Socialists!

THE MINISTER (*hurriedly*). I will give your message, gentlemen. (*The band plays.*)

*The gramophone wheezes.*

THE MUSE. De-lightful!

SATAN smiles, and inserts a new disc.

SATAN. I'm so pleased you like it so far. We're now coming to something more *mouvementé*, as you would say, dear Clio.

*The cinema represents a palace garden full of allegorical statues and triumphal arches. A Monarch is walking up and down in company with two or three Generals. An Equerry presents a telegram to the Monarch, who, after opening it negligently, gives a tremendous start.*

1<sup>ST</sup> VOICE. Good God! *Nein! unglaublich!* Gentlemen, of what do you think that this despatch acquaints me? My venerable cousin's young cousin, the Heir-Apparent of the most Ancient and most Christian Empire of Felix-Nube, has just been murdered near the railway station of a small town in a disaffected district he was graciously visiting.

SEVERAL VOICES. What! Prince Balthasar-Augustin? The hope of Felix-Nube? Murdered! Dead! Your Majesty does not say so!

1<sup>ST</sup> VOICE (*much distressed*). *Murdered!* Shot dead with his—although, of course, only morganatic—Consort. The heir of so great a Monarchy! Good Lord! Good Lord, gentlemen, what—what, I ask you—WHAT is this world coming to?

2<sup>ND</sup> VOICE (*bluntly*). Coming to, your Majesty? Why, to the very thing most urgently needed for the world's moral salvation!

3<sup>RD</sup> VOICE. This truly regrettable and most atrociously criminal event may yet—once we have brought our tribute of tears to the noble and lamented Prince—may yet—I say it

subject to the All Highest's correction—turn out the greatest stroke of luck your Empire has had for many years.

1<sup>ST</sup> VOICE (*extremely perturbed*). Luck? Have you no sense of moral fitness, my dear General? Don't you understand that it is a *Prince* who has been murdered?—a *Crown Prince*, a member of one of the most august and sacred reigning families, an Heir-Apparent, almost on the steps of a throne. Moreover, my first cousin. Alas, alas! that heaven should have been pleased to send us to live in these godless democratic days!

3<sup>RD</sup> VOICE. Undoubtedly a dreadful trial for all right-minded and pious men! But your Majesty's grief should not blind the All Highest's perspicacious eyes to the fact that this providentially timed crime affords the opportunity of making an end, once and for always, to all this unmanly and dangerous democratic twaddle.

1<sup>ST</sup> VOICE. General, what *do* you mean? You seem shockingly insensible to the horror of political assassination.

2<sup>ND</sup> VOICE (*solemnly*). The medicine for political assassination, and for all Socialistic and irreligious unrest, your Majesty, is the ancient purge and tonic vouchsafed by Heaven for a sickly world: *War!*

*The gramophone wheezes.*

THE MUSE. Capital! First-rate!

*The cinema shows a veranda by the riverside. People in flannels at lunch, also ladies.*

1<sup>ST</sup> VOICE. I really must tell you and our *si spirituelle* hostess a very funny thing which occurred this morning. It is really unheard-of and most amusing, and confirms all our opinions of certain persons. Well, then, at ten o'clock, while I was finishing my *déjeuner à l'anglaise*, who should come but my secretary, with a face a yard long, to tell me that six

months ago you had made a naval engagement with our amiable common neighbours. I told him he must be dreaming, for my Government had never told me a word about it. Or is it possible that my enemies have left me in the dark on purpose? Do tell me!

2ND VOICE (*laughing immoderately*). That is a good joke! That old story! You are to be congratulated on your secretary, my dear Excellency. Why, it's in Hansard! There was a question in the House, and I duly answered it. Now I want you to try this vulgar beverage which is sacred to river-parties in this country. It is called Shandy-gaff!

1ST VOICE. *Shandy-gaff!* Ah, so! This is Shandy-gaff which I have read about in your great novelist Dickens. Do let me taste it! You know I adore all local customs, everything that has the *goût du terroir* . . .

*The gramophone wheezes. The cinema represents an Imperial wardrobe, with rows and rows of different uniforms hanging in open presses. The Monarch is walking up and down, attended by his staff and by an Ambassador in mutton-chop whiskers. The Monarch occasionally stops and pulls out the sleeve or trouser-leg of one of the uniforms and looks at it very gravely.*

1ST VOICE. Why, I have kept Europe at peace for twenty-five years.

2ND VOICE (THE AMBASSADOR). The very reason, so please your Majesty, for not keeping Europe at peace a twenty-sixth. Let me implore your Majesty not to become imbued with those pacifist illusions which, however creditable to the idealism of your Imperial heart, merely prevent your Majesty seeing the real dangers of the present situation. The great White Bear . . .

1ST VOICE. Dear old Nikky! Now that's a pacifist and idealist, if you like! (*Laughs.*) There's nothing to fear from his side. His family and mine have always adored each other

*au fond*; and, after all, we, and of course your venerable Master of Felix-Nube, are the only real Monarchs still left in the world.

2ND VOICE. Your Majesty's dear Nikky may adore *you* as much as you choose, but it's different with us in Felix-Nube. His *entourage* is bent upon breaking up our Monarchy for the benefit of his little vassals.

1ST VOICE. *Allons donc!* My dear Ambassador! Why, Nikky's *entourage* is composed of monks and archimandrites.

2ND VOICE. And behind these are his Heads of Police, who know that the only way of staving off a new and final revolution—your Majesty knows there is a general strike threatened in Hyperborea—is to embark upon a Holy War.

1ST VOICE. Not a bad idea, either. It might be the way to stop all these confounded Socialists. Though, of course, dear Excellency, I have only to say a word, and all my Socialists will recognize that I represent all that is sane and practical in Socialism. They would all rally round my victorious, and in all essentials eminently modern and progressive, banner.

2ND VOICE. No doubt, no doubt. But if your Majesty will allow me to return to my previous remark, your country and mine are encircled by enemies, and there can be no doubt that the great White Bear . . . Then there is our amiable Cisalpine ally getting a little tired of its famous *tour de valse* with your Majesty, and making eyes at partners on the other side!

1ST VOICE. Yes, the ungrateful little baggage! And we who have given it one province after another and enabled it to have a far better army and navy than it ever wanted! All the same, our dear little Machiavels know which side their bread is buttered, and my Cisalpine cousin has just made me a Colonel of his Hundred Halberdiers. Here, you see, is the uniform, not quite worthy of the ancient artistic fame of that country; when I think what a design for a helmet, real Renaissance, but quite practical, I could have made them!

But you were saying, my dear Ambassador? (*The Monarch glances over his shoulder at a pier-glass and adjusts his moustache, then continues turning over the uniforms.*) You were, I think, saying . . .

2<sup>ND</sup> VOICE. Then there is the perfidious Leviathan building three keels to your one. It has, moreover, engaged to defend the coasts of Marianne, and entered into an informal agreement with the White Bear.

1<sup>ST</sup> VOICE. Oh, Leviathan is all right, my dear Excellency! They love me because I give them such good advice about Colonial warfare and the laying-out of public promenades, and because I was so attentive to my venerable ancestress; I never failed to send her flowers on her birthday. Besides, they have a Peace, Retrenchment, and Reform Ministry, and their hands full with those odd Mavourneen people whom I had to lunch here lately. The proof is that they have just made me Colonel of their Mountain Artillery—a becoming uniform for a Sovereign who happens to have a leg, though a little chilly. (*The Monarch caresses a kilt in one of the open wardrobes.*)

2<sup>ND</sup> VOICE. All the more reason, your Majesty, for choosing this moment to have done, once and for all, with that alliance between the White Bear and Marianne. We could smash them in a week.

1<sup>ST</sup> VOICE. But I don't like war, only preparedness for war, which is necessary to brace a noble nation's spirits—at least, I don't like war more than a member of my family always *must* like war. Of course, the lamented Prince Balthasar-Augustin was a very pleasant, well-informed man, even if he did marry beneath his rank, though I'm bound to say—and I said it to my wife—that the lady was quite presentable. But it really is no business of mine if he got himself murdered. And Felix-Nube is, luckily, well off for Heirs not quite so apparent, but quite ready to put in an appearance—eh, my dear Ambassador? (*Laughs at his own joke.*)

2ND VOICE (*desperately*). Sir, sir, remember that when you have allowed the White Bear and your Cisalpine cousin to eat up Felix-Nube, you will be left without a friend in the world. You can't ally yourself, come now, with these preposterous cut-throat little nations whom Felix-Nube is supposed to oppress. A word in time, your Majesty! Your Monarchy requires Felix-Nube as much as Felix-Nube requires you!

1ST VOICE. Require *you*? For what, I wonder? Against the toy militia of Leviathan and its Liberal shopkeepers, who will never make war, least of all in favour of a barbarous Asiatic despotism and against a scion of their Royal house? Or against those degenerates of Marianne, with their most un-Christian two-child regime? No, no, don't let's exaggerate, my dear Ambassador.

2ND VOICE (*with vehement solemnity*). Sir, let not history have to record that when the call came from on High, to save from destruction the most venerable throne of all Europe, it happened that the greatest living Monarch, the mystic Grail King, consecrated to be God's right hand, hesitated for a moment. . . . I implore your Majesty's forgiveness for my unseemly vehemence. Love for my august, heartbroken master has caused me to overstep . . . And that reminds me: What message shall I take my aged Sovereign from your Majesty?

1ST VOICE (*rhetorically, with a fine gesture*). Tell him that whosoever God's mandate comes, then will the Grail King . . . (*Interrupts himself and continues hurriedly*.) 'In short, please say all sorts of kind things to the good old man, and tell him that my Consort and myself will send a little tribute of flowers to put upon the poor Crown Prince's coffin. And now I really must be off to refresh my mind on my new yacht. Also I have to say a few encouraging words to my valiant U-boats. Good-bye.'

*The gramophone wheezes. SATAN changes the disc. The cinema shows a room in the War Office of Ogreland. The Ambassador with mutton-chop whiskers in private converse with two or three Generals.*

**AMBASSADOR.** He really is impossible to deal with, excuse my saying so. I thought I had moved him a little by playing on the religious-romantic, the Wagner, stop. I went so far as to compare him with the Grail King. But there it is ; one's always up against that . . . well ! that extraordinary dislike he has to bloodshed.

**1ST GENERAL.** Poor fellow! It's quite genuine. It's a constitutional idiosyncrasy. Some people feel like that about oysters ; a Field-Marshal I once knew couldn't be in the same room with them. But, believe me, dear Ambassador, he'll be all right once the band strikes up and there's a call for prancing and eloquence.

**2ND GENERAL.** Only let him be safe out of our way for the next few days. I'll answer for him once the die is cast.

**AMBASSADOR.** *Once the die is cast.* But who is to cast it ?

**1ST GENERAL.** Why, Felix-Nube, to be sure.

**AMBASSADOR.** Will you undertake to get it regarded by your people as a *casus fœderis* ?

**1ST GENERAL.** Oh, well, a *casus fœderis* is going a little too far, our alliance being purely defensive. Rather let us say a blank cheque. We offer to exert our influence with you in favour of peace. Then we turn our backs—do you see ?

**AMBASSADOR.** And when we look round, will you promise to be standing there . . . well, in your celebrated shining armour ? (*The door has opened and the Monarch enters.*) Oh, I was not aware that your Majesty was honouring our little chat with your presence. . . . Indeed, I imagined your Majesty was off on your cruise. . . .

MONARCH. So I should be if they hadn't made a trifling mistake in executing my design for a Viking's uniform. But what were you saying about shining armour, eh ?

AMBASSADOR. Only alluding to the Grail King, your Majesty. Only remarking how conducive that immortal remark of your Majesty's had been to keep the peace of Europe!

MONARCH. Ha ! My words *are* really as persuasive as my guns ! Good-bye for the moment, and my love to my aged cousin.

1ST GENERAL. Once he's well out of the way you just proceed with your well-known moderation and discretion in the matter of that ultimatum.

AMBASSADOR. Do you mean, as it says on the Kodaks, "just press the button ? "

2ND GENERAL (*laughing*). "And we'll do the rest!"

*The gramophone wheezes. SATAN changes the disc. The cinematograph shows a library. Two Statesmen, one of whom we have seen previously, pretending to play chess.*

THE OTHER STATESMAN. I fear, then, that your mission must be considered a failure ?

THE USUAL STATESMAN. By no means a failure, since it has cleared away all doubts and, if the situation develop, all hesitation. It was no good offering them concessions in the Queen of Sheba's territory, or anywhere else; no good threatening to increase our armaments if they persisted in increasing theirs. They say they want peace ; but it isn't what *we* consider peace. In similar cases the only possible way to reconcile conflicting contingencies is for us also to offer peace, but prepare for war. I may say with a clear conscience that throughout my whole career I have done my best to proceed in both these contrary directions.

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THE OTHER STATESMAN. You have, indeed ; and I'm sure the world will never forget your services. But, meanwhile, all this preparing for war while trying for peace costs a devil of a lot ; it might almost be described as spelling ruin, let alone unpopularity. Our people, who can't be expected to understand the underlying philosophy of this policy, are getting bored with this endless building and scrapping of expensive navies. This *para-bellum* policy leaves our party with neither money nor leisure for the vast internal reforms to which it is pledged. There is education, housing, land tenure, endowment for research, baby culture, and the reform of the House of Lords. . . . But how can we turn to any of these things so long as those ruffians go on piling up armies and navies, and oblige us to addle our brains about Budgets ? Upon my word, this armed peace, these hostile camps of alliances, are worse than war !

THE USUAL STATESMAN. Worse than war ?

THE OTHER STATESMAN. Oh, well, of course one doesn't mean such remarks to be taken literally ! Of course, war is the most unparalleled of calamities, the most unthinkable horror ; indeed, one which no decent mind can bear to contemplate. Still, one can't help sometimes just thinking how delightfully peaceful it would be if only one had made an end of it all.

THE USUAL STATESMAN. Do you mean—ahem!—made an end to *them* ?

THE OTHER STATESMAN. Oh, well, perhaps not to *them* ; indeed, certainly *not to them*. I'm sure this country wouldn't wish to make an end to so much as a fly . . . I mean . . . make an end to their—shall we say ?—militarism. Once that were thoroughly cleared away, why one might get rid of the Balance of Power, that . . . what was it Bright called it ? *something* idol . . . ah, yes, *foul* idol. I always did think Bright's language was sometimes a little excessive. One might have a Concert of Nations—of Free Nations ! A peaceful and democratic world !

THE USUAL STATESMAN. Ah, yes, the lion and the lamb, as Isaiah recommended in such a highly practical spirit! That idea is, indeed, at the bottom of all my political philosophy; and, I may say, of all my practical efforts. The reconciliation of the two conflicting ideas, Peace and War!

THE OTHER STATESMAN. It is, indeed, the basis of all true statesmanship. Only how to do it?

THE USUAL STATESMAN. My dear Lord, this country has been in no doubt about *how to do it*, quite half a dozen times in its career, and to its eternal credit and the salvation of mankind. Take Philip II, Louis XIV, Napoleon. There is no doubt that, in the last case especially, we gave peace—the Peace of Vienna—to Europe.

THE OTHER STATESMAN. True. We did it in all those cases by crushing the other party. And that, unhappily, requires war. And war is a horror which no decent man can so much as think of; and which this country, and especially the Liberals in this country, would regard as an inexpiable crime.

THE USUAL STATESMAN. Not if the other people begin.

THE OTHER STATESMAN. To be sure—(*he starts very slightly*). That hadn't occurred to me.

THE USUAL STATESMAN. *Quem Deus vult . . .* What is the exact quotation about the gods making people mad when they want to undo them?

THE OTHER STATESMAN. I fear my Latin has got rather rusty; but I grasp the meaning, although I can't quite parse it. . . .

THE USUAL STATESMAN. In the same way I often think there is a deeper meaning—an ethical and political meaning—in the information given us by Scripture that the Lord hardened the heart of Pharaoh. . . .

THE OTHER STATESMAN. Wasn't that just a bit rough on Pharaoh? And there were a lot of plagues and massacres

which, though quite legitimate then, would shock our modern conscience. A certain disregard to increased human suffering. . . .

THE USUAL STATESMAN. My dear old friend, allow me to remind you that ethics, which is the science of good and evil, has nothing to do with increase or decrease of suffering. Ethics takes cognisance only of Responsibilities.

THE OTHER STATESMAN. Is that so? Well, of course, war undoubtedly *does* increase suffering, and in so far is a most shocking thing to the modern conscience. One couldn't possibly make oneself responsible for it, could one?

THE USUAL STATESMAN (*with a deprecating gesture, looking up from the chessboard*). Of course not. But if it were forced upon one. . . .

*The gramophone wheezes. The cinema shows a Ministerial smoking-room. Two Diplomatists engaged in conversation—one like a very old, thin racehorse, the other like a very podgy pony.*

1<sup>ST</sup> VOICE. I can only repeat that your Government need not be in the least degree nervous. We cannot, indeed, commit ourselves to anything so definite as a promise, but, while keeping our hands completely free, we can assure your Excellency of our hearty co-operation.

2<sup>ND</sup> VOICE. But, *mon cher collègue*, you must allow me to point out that . . . if we are to . . . we really require . . . *Enfin, vous admettez, n'est-ce pas?*

1<sup>ST</sup> VOICE. One moment! They want me on the telephone. Will you look at *Punch*? Hullo! . . . oh, it's you . . . quite well, thanks. I hope you didn't catch cold on the river. Oh . . . do I understand that your people are asking about an order for additional battleships? They've had confidential information from our friend of the International Armament Trust? Tell them it's probably a little bit of commercial

advertisement. Good-bye! (*Rings off.*) Forgive me, dear Excellency. You were saying? Let me repeat that your Excellency has not the least need to feel nervous. We can only . . .

2ND VOICE. *Mais, permettez . . . permettez . . . I require . . .*

*The gramophone wheezes. The cinema shows the House of Commons, very empty.*

AN AUTHORITATIVE VOICE. The answer is in the negative.

*The gramophone wheezes. The cinema represents the drawing-room of a Peeress. A committee of ladies at a table.*

1ST FEMALE VOICE. Madame Chairman, I wish to point out to this Committee for supplying hospital requisites for our troops in Ireland . . .

2ND FEMALE VOICE. Order! order! I shall proceed to read to this Committee the resolution empowering your Chairman to inquire of each member how many wounded volunteers from Ireland she can undertake to make room for within . . .

3RD FEMALE VOICE. Those darling volunteers! But I'm certain that dear Holy Roman Majesty will come to their assistance! Anything, I always say, rather than separation from the Mother Country!

*The gramophone wheezes. The screen remains blank.*

THE MUSE. Enchanting! It's heating up!

SATAN. It is. What's coming ought to be reeled off at a tearing pace; but I shall slow my machine so that you may be able to follow. So!

SATAN sets both apparatuses going. The cinema keeps running one picture into another. The gramophone snaps out a series of short sentences, each punctuated with a wheeze.

1<sup>ST</sup> VOICE. I must point out to your Excellency that the Treaty of 1796 makes express provision . . .

2<sup>ND</sup> VOICE. The sanctity of International Agreements imperatively demands . . .

3<sup>RD</sup> VOICE. Self-defence can know no law . . .

4<sup>TH</sup> VOICE. The Balance of Power absolutely requires . . .

5<sup>TH</sup> VOICE. National honour is engaged . . .

6<sup>TH</sup> VOICE. We should be left without a friend . . .

7<sup>TH</sup> VOICE. Neutrality . . .

8<sup>TH</sup> VOICE. Integrity . . .

9<sup>TH</sup> VOICE. Independence . . .

10<sup>TH</sup> VOICE. Diplomatic secrecy obliges us . . .

11<sup>TH</sup> VOICE. The *Times* has a leading article . . .

12<sup>TH</sup> VOICE. Public opinion in this country insists . . .

13<sup>TH</sup> VOICE. Such a thing as war is utterly inconceivable.

14<sup>TH</sup> VOICE. Infamous proposals!

15<sup>TH</sup> VOICE. Scraps of paper!

16<sup>TH</sup> VOICE. My passports!

SATAN slows off a little. *The cinema shows a railway platform with train drawn up. People with bouquets at the windows of the train ; others bowing on the platform.*

1<sup>ST</sup> VOICE. *Au revoir, chère Excellence ! Bon voyage.*

2<sup>ND</sup> VOICE. (*at the window*). I shall never forget the Guard of Honour! I am indeed touched. *Vous m'avez comblé de prévenances . . .* There is nothing to come up to your dear country.

*The train starts. Hats are waved. The gramophone wheezes. The cinema shows only a blank, but a voice says : "Now we must have a good Press." There is a sudden wheezing pause, during which the AGES-TO-COME exchange looks of foolish intelligence.*

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**THE MUSE.** How truly fascinating! Do let us have some more, my dear Satan!

**SATAN.** It is rather good fun, all those delicious old boys, isn't it? Now you shall hear quite another bit, when the Ballet is in full swing.

*SATAN puts by a lot of gramophone discs in a drawer, and locks it very carefully.*

**SATAN (to THE MUSE).** To prevent confusion, dear Clio, please make it quite clear to our friends, the Ages-to-Come, that what they have just witnessed was a *retrospect*. The first scenes took place years before the opening of the Ballet you so much enjoyed; and even the very last of the set preceded it by some days. The first one, for instance, was quite, if I may say so to Clio, *ancient history*.

*SATAN unlocks another drawer and begins arranging a heap of discs which he takes out.*

**SATAN.** I wish we had had time for a larger selection of *pre-war incidents*, as you, dear Muse, will call them when you set it all forth with the necessary "Style Noble." I should have liked to show you the gradual preparation for my Ballet, not merely in the last few years, but all through a century—indeed, all through *all* the centuries, since every war has been prepared by every other war—indeed, by every other treaty of peace; the needful feelings and prejudices accumulating through the ages in my storehouse, ready to shift about, as an earthly manager shifts the same old properties, from one side of the stage to the other. However, even these few samples will have served to illustrate a thing I told you during our preliminary talk in Hell. I mean that calamities—since Mankind feels my Ballets to be calamities—of this kind do not spring from the small and negligible item which suffering and angry men call *guilt*. My excellent Minion, Confusion—that is to say, muddle-headedness, perfunctoriness, and apathy—contrives the necessary entanglements and deadlocks during

years. But once these preparations are made, Delusion bursts in, inventing plausible motives, helped by enthusiasm, fear, and hatred, reasons so called for what are in reality mere idiotic bungles left to chance. Well, my kind friends, now we have done with the *pre-war selection*, and we'll have a few scenes which you must imagine taking place behind the World's Stage when the Ballet is already raging. Indeed, the first is just about the moment when Pity and Indignation came on, with, as you will remember, such a fine effect and to such good purpose. Attention!

*SATAN sets his double apparatus in motion. The cinema shows distant cupolas, pines, and broken columns through wide-open windows. Several elderly gentlemen at coffee and cigarettes.*

1ST VOICE. What's this absurd story that I hear! They surely haven't the impudence to offer you Gog and Magog, my dear Prime Minister?

2ND AND PLACID VOICE. They do indeed, my dear Excellency. Needless to say, my heart is entirely on your side, but, as you know, in the case of a great historical people the claims of the Ego are holy.

1ST VOICE. In that case, tell them to go to the Devil for a pack of liars. If you remain neutral they won't give you anything.

2ND AND PLACID VOICE. Will *you* if I leave off being neutral?

1ST VOICE. We! Of course we shall. Why, you shall have Gog and Magog.

2ND AND PLACID VOICE. I can have Gog and Magog merely by sitting tight, my dear sirs.

1ST VOICE. Well! And what else can you possibly want? Let's hear! Only don't be listening to their tomfoolery. Besides, we all know how unpopular they are with your people.

2ND AND PLACID VOICE. (*blander than ever*). Not so unpopular as going to war.

1ST VOICE. Oh, your people only require to be told the real facts. A little propaganda will suit them. I don't believe they've been properly informed about the atrocities. . . . That child with cut-off hands, for instance . . .

2ND AND PLACID VOICE (*bland*). The child with cut-off hands has already been shown to us. But our people don't mind cut-off hands or gouged-out eyes. We had a lot of that of our own recently in Carthage. Besides, our most celebrated living *littérateur* always has some in each of his works.

1ST VOICE. Ha! Your immortal, though perhaps a little *décolleté*, Angelo! The very thing! A few dozen of his splendid odes in the principal papers . . .

2ND AND PLACID VOICE. Good for the students at the café! dear Excellency. We statesmen don't live off odes. Machiavelli already said as much.

1ST VOICE. Well, then, what are your terms, confound you ?

THE BLAND VOICE (*very quickly*). Gog and Magog, and all their territory ; Maraschino, of course ; the complete set of border glaciers ; the kingdoms of the late Crœsus and Polyrcrates, with the islands of the Cyclops for their classic associations ; Prester John's Empire, which is mentioned in Marco Polo ; the heritage of our glorious sea-kings as shown by their still existing flagstaffs, including, naturally, the seaboard of Bohemia, so much embellished by our valiant fellow-countryman, Diocletian.

1ST VOICE. Seaboard of Bohemia! Come, come! You know to whom that belongs! And as to Prester John, why, he's neutral.

THE BLAND VOICE. So are we for the moment, my dear sirs!

**ANOTHER VOICE (aside).** Oh, throw in Prester John—he had a bite at him thirty years ago and broke his teeth on him. And let him have the flagstaffs of his sea-kings.

**1ST VOICE.** All right! But not the seaboard of Bohemia; that has been promised to our poor dear Ladislaus by right of nationality.

**THE BLAND VOICE.** Poor dear Ladislaus is already in, or rather already *out*, since he's squashed. He needn't have anything. *Enfin*, gentlemen, is it to be or not to be?

**SEVERAL VOICES (mutter together).** I suppose we shall have to promise him something. And there's not much harm so long as he gets it for himself. After all, we haven't got any of it in our hands. All right. The kingdom of the late Crœsus and—what's the other name? And Prester John, although he is a neutral. And the flagstaffs . . . there—you may make out a memorandum for our joint consideration.

**THE BLAND VOICE.** A memorandum? (*Singing.*) *Un biglietto? Eccolo qua!* Here's your memorandum ready to hand. Suppose all you gentlemen just put your signatures to it before we finish this excellent *café noir*? The fact is, the other side are going to call for an answer at four o'clock.

**3RD VOICE.** Wouldn't you like us to throw in a pair of trousers, my dear Minister? Mine, as you see, are almost as good as new.

**THE BLAND VOICE (laughs).** Ah, what it is to be the most *spirituel* nation in the world!

*The gramophone wheezes. SATAN changes the disc. The cinema shows a council-table. Many Councillors who remain mute.*

**1ST VOICE.** They insist that we must really push on to Cæsarea.

**2ND VOICE.** But our Fleet can't get through.

3RD VOICE. Oh, yes, it can, if supported by our Army.

4TH VOICE. But our Army can't get there by land.

5TH VOICE. Oh, yes, it can, if it is supported by our Fleet.

1ST VOICE. Anyhow, they insist that we should do something to get them Cæsarea.

6TH VOICE. If neither the Army nor the Fleet can do it, what do you say to a joint effort of both?

*The gramophone wheezes. The cinema shows the terrace of a château in the war zone. A group of elderly men in various uniforms, to which some seem neither suited nor accustomed.*

1ST VOICE. As your experts have doubtless informed you, my Government finds itself under the necessity of somewhat raising the ground-rent of such portions of our territory as are occupied by your troops.

2ND VOICE. Oh . . . Indeed . . . I had not heard anything about that. . . . In fact . . . to tell the plain truth . . . I had always taken for granted that as . . . in fact . . . if I may say so . . . our lines are helping to defend . . .

1ST VOICE. Alas! *à qui le dites-vous*, my dear friend, *à qui le dites-vous!* For this very reason, as ground rents invariably tend to rise in war-time, *enfin* . . .

2ND VOICE. But . . . considering that . . .

1ST VOICE. Ah, my dear friend . . . how do you put that maxim of your national greatness? Business (you say *as I think*)—business as us-u-al!

2ND VOICE. Surely not in case of . . . in short, we imagined . . .

1ST VOICE. What a number of quite unimaginable eventualities we all have witnessed! Unimaginable, I say. *Enfin*, we have so far had only to congratulate ourselves on your great nation's . . . how do you say? . . . *procédés*, which,

as I shall always be the first to proclaim in the face of everyone, have hitherto always been *d'un parfait gentelmanne*. As that famous Frenchman said—his name escapes me at this moment—if I could not belong to my own nation, I should have no objection to belonging to yours.

2<sup>ND</sup> VOICE. Very gratifying, I am sure. Still, as between allies . . .

1<sup>ST</sup> VOICE. You speak of allies. Are you aware, monsieur, of the story which is at this moment circulating—I do not pretend it is a true story, but I can truly affirm that it is circulating—in all the . . . how do you express it? . . . all the *loges* of all the *concierges* of my country?

2<sup>ND</sup> VOICE. The *concierges* . . . I don't quite follow, my dear General.

1<sup>ST</sup> VOICE. The purport of which story is that more than once—*more* than once, you understand me well, my dear friend—*more than once*, if it had not been for our loyalty to you, we might have made an advantageous . . .

2<sup>ND</sup> VOICE. Oh, my dear sir, is that all? Those Bourse rumours set going by enemy agents in the States!

1<sup>ST</sup> VOICE. Bourse rumours or not, I do not pretend to judge. I only tell you what is being said in the *loges* of the *concierges*. I have it on the best authority that those vulgar persons say in their trivial language that they have had enough of getting their face . . . how do you express it? . . . smashed—*se faire casser la figure*—to defend other people's ports. \*

3<sup>RD</sup> VOICE (*low*). Oh, just let them gas . . . you know, it's a way they have.

1<sup>ST</sup> VOICE. And this brings me to the essential. Your Government must not delay any longer putting its signature to that little agreement which we made with the Great White Bear, by which, in return for Cæsarea, he gives us the other

bank of the River Hydaspes—in fact, our natural boundaries as defined in the year 4 of the Republic—*bien entendu* including the mines of antimony and the lake of asphalt.

2ND VOICE. *He* gives you! . . . Your boundaries of the year 4! . . . Why, my dear General, the Great White Bear is nearly a thousand miles off!

1ST VOICE. Correct, from the geographical point of view, perhaps. But geography is only the basis of politics. And now you have been told what those *concierges* are saying to each other in their familiar *phraséologie*.

*The gramophone wheezes. The cinema shows an Embassy, with a dishevelled man walking up and down, surrounded by well-groomed diplomats.*

1ST VOICE (*very distressed*). But *I* must stop, and I'm going to stop!

SEVERAL VOICES (*encouragingly*). Tut, tut! Just hold on a little, and you shall be given Cæsarea presently.

1ST VOICE (*angry*). Hang Cæsarea! My country would not have it if you could give it, and you can't. I tell you my country can't go on another month. We've no more munitions. And the people are starving by the thousand; they're mutinying and rioting on every side. There! don't you hear them yelling for peace?

*A fearful wolf-like sound from outside: "Peace and Bread! Peace and Bread!"*

A DIPLOMATIC VOICE (*encouragingly*). Fiddlesticks! All that is got up by enemy agents. Just you hold on till you get Cæsarea.

*Louder roar: "Peace and Bread!"*

SATAN (*interrupting*). Bother take the thing! A wrong disc!

*He fiddles with the gramophone, which slows off.*

**THE MUSE.** Oh, how truly thrilling! Why, it sounds like the French Revolution! Oh, dear Satan, do, please, let them go on with that!

**SATAN.** Sorry to disoblige you, Clio. But it's a wrongly placed disc which doesn't belong to the set of the Heads of the Nations, with which you must, if you please, allow me to proceed at present.

**THE MUSE.** What a pity! It was so truly exciting!

**SATAN.** Only have patience! I promise you plenty more of this kind of stuff very soon in a separate performance—and a remarkably interesting one that will be, though different from the Ballet of the Nations. For the moment, we must return to the diplomatists and journalists.

*While SATAN is adjusting the gramophone, the blood-curdling yell, "Peace and Bread! Peace and Bread!" is repeated, and dies off in the gramophone's wheezing.*

**SATAN.** There! Now we've got back to the Heads of the Nations series all right. I must explain, however, that there were some unofficial peace feelers which have unluckily got mislaid; also a very funny person talking of peace without victory, which made everyone angry all round until he said it was to be peace with victory and joined in, and that it would all come to the same in the end. But what is happening at present is that these people of the Great White Bear, whom you heard yelling just now, are actually making a separate peace. There! .

*The cinema shows the inside of a saloon railway carriage in a station, and a snowstorm against the windows. The saloon is filled with Generals with fine fur coats over their uniforms, and bearded men in sheepskin caftans and peasants' boots and fur caps.*

**1ST VOICE.** No annexations and no indemnities, comrades!

2ND VOICE. The very thing—no annexations and no indemnities! Shake hands!

1ST VOICE. Not so fast, please! You are occupying Aurora Borealis. How's that?

2ND VOICE. Oh, that isn't annexation. That's self-determination.

1ST VOICE. All very fine! But what do you mean by commandeering my corn?

2ND VOICE. Oh, that surely can't be called an indemnity.

1ST VOICE. Oh, it can't, can't it? Well, then, my friends, when you hear that we've stirred up a revolution in your country, please to remember that this isn't a Treaty of Peace! It's the beginning of the International Socialist Republic! Hurrah!

*A General jumps up and hits the table with his sword, crying :  
“That shall teach your people subordination !”*

1ST SPEAKER (*waving a folded newspaper*). This shall teach your Empire rebellion!

*The gramophone wheezes. The cinema shows a council chamber full of statesmen.*

1ST VOICE. Don't you think, my lords and gentlemen, that the time might be nearly approaching when it would . . . it might, possibly be just as well to be beginning just to cast an eye on any possible . . I do not, mark, say *probable* . . avenues —ahem!—leading to an eventual peace?

2ND VOICE. Avenues to peace! Almost the most dangerous things in the world! Let alone peace itself, which is, of course, the most dangerous thing of all!

3RD VOICE. The name of peace must not be mentioned till they have restored Brobdingnag!

4TH VOICE. The name of peace must never be mentioned till they have given us back Lilliput!

5TH VOICE. The name of peace must not be mentioned till I have reannexed the seaboard of Bohemia, the flagstaffs of the sea-kings, the kingdoms of . . .

6TH VOICE. The name of peace must never be mentioned at all!

*The gramophone wheezes. The cinema shows a Court of Law, packed with spectators.*

A VOICE. The name of peace must never be mentioned by any decent man or woman! Are any of you aware, I wonder, that at this present moment this country harbours in its bosom 47,000 aliens from Sodom and Gomorrah, all busily plotting peace? Does that seem too monstrous for belief? Well, their names and addresses are all registered in a printed book. This young lady, whom I have called as a witness, has actually seen the book!

FEMALE WITNESS. I have. It was shown me by two gentlemen friends, since deceased, at a lunch-party at Greenwich. It was bound in American cloth.

JUDICIAL VOICE. Was it, indeed? And did you see the contents of the book?

1ST VOICE. The contents, my lord, comprised the name of everyone here present who dares to ask pacifist questions.

*The gramophone wheezes. The cinema changes back to a council chamber full of statesmen of various nationalities. As the dialogue proceeds it changes to other council chambers in other parts of the world, which flicker in and out without interruption.*

1ST VOICE. But they appear to be talking of a possible restoration of Brobdingnag.

2ND VOICE. Ha! A peace trap!

1<sup>ST</sup> VOICE. But they even suggest reconsidering the question of Lilliput.

3<sup>RD</sup> VOICE. Oh, *another* peace trap.

CHORUS OF ANGRY VOICES. Peace traps! Peace traps!

ALL TOGETHER. Who dares to mention peace till they have restored Brobdingnag and given back Lilliput; given me the seaboard of Bohemia . . .

ANOTHER VOICE. Given me also the seaboard of Bo . . .

ONE VOICE AFTER ANOTHER. We can't talk of peace till they have been dismembered and for ever silenced. It wouldn't really be peace unless we received our strategic frontiers. It wouldn't really be peace unless we had restored our natural boundaries. It wouldn't really be peace until we had realized our racial aspirations. It wouldn't really be peace until we had reconstituted our historical Empire.

ONE VOICE (*deliberately*). It wouldn't be peace until we had the other bank of the Hydaspes. It wouldn't be peace until we had got the mines of antimony. It would not be peace until we had realized the formula of the Carolingian Kings and of the Patriots of the year 4. It wouldn't be peace till we had reclaimed the Asiatic appanage of our Crusaders!

*Someone in the council room hums "Partant pour le Syrie."*

ANOTHER VOICE (*enthusiastically*). It wouldn't be peace till we had fulfilled the aspirations of D'Annunzio. It wouldn't be peace until we had re-established the Wedding of the Adriatic.

3<sup>RD</sup> VOICE. It wouldn't be peace until we had re-established the Kingdom of Mazeppa.

4<sup>TH</sup> VOICE. It wouldn't be peace until we had re-established the Empire of Ziska.

OTHER VOICES. It wouldn't be peace until we had re-estab-

lished the Kingdom of Ladislaus. It wouldn't be peace until we'd re-established the Kingdom of Borislaus. It wouldn't be peace until we had re-established the Kingdom of Wenceslaus. It wouldn't be peace until we had re-established the Kingdom of Mithridates. It wouldn't be peace until we had re-established the Kingdom of Tiridates. It wouldn't be peace until we had re-established the Empire of Alexander. It wouldn't be peace until we'd re-established the Empire of Solomon. It wouldn't be peace until we had re-established the Empire of the Queen of Sheba.

1ST VOICE. It won't be peace till all my bondholders get paid up their interest.

CHORUS. Peace traps! Peace traps! Peace traps!

IMPERTURBABLE AUTHORITATIVE VOICE. We are out for lasting peace.

A HUBBUB OF VOICES. Peace? Then why did we go to war? You promised . . . we promised . . . they promised . . . We insist on your promise . . . We have made no promises . . . We always keep our promises.

AUTHORITATIVE VOICE (*serenely*). I repeat that we are none of us out for aggrandisement, but for the future peace of the world. We must go on fighting to establish a really lasting peace, equally just towards friends and foes.

A HUBBUB OF VOICES. You promised . . . We promised . . . They promised . . . We insist on your promises! It isn't a matter of aggrandisement! It isn't a matter of prestige! It is a question of principle! It is a question of guarantees! It is a question of permanent peace! This must never happen again! We can't have such things happening again! This *must* be the last war! We must have guarantees of future peace! We will fight to the last man until we have guarantees of future peace! (*A pause and wheeze.*) Lasting

peace! Last man! Last penny! Last drop of blood! Last war! Guarantees! Guarantees! Guarantees! Guarantees of lasting peace!

*The gramophone gabbles all this out louder and faster, while the cinema figures move and gesticulate quicker, until there is nothing but a hubbub of "We—we" . . . "They—they" . . . "You—you," with a sort of refrain of "Last man!" "Last penny!" "Last war!" "Lasting peace!"*

THE MUSE and AGES-TO-COME (*holding their hands to their ears*). Oh! do stop that horrible row! Oh! what are they all talking about?

SATAN suddenly switches off the current. The screen is again blank. The gramophone wheezes and stops.

SATAN. Rather a Babel, wasn't it? And what you have heard is comparatively plain sailing. Why, we haven't come to Victory and its Fruits, nor to the conflicting Self-Determination of the New Nationalities; we haven't come to the Fourteen Points and the Secret Treaties; we haven't come to Famine and Revolution and Bolshevism. Excellent as is my magic apparatus, you couldn't possibly make head or tail of that. It will take fifty years in fifty archives to clear up the muddle. Indeed, if you were to ask me, even I couldn't tell you on the spur of the moment how in the world it all leads to the end. Well, that is the kind of stuff that you, dear Muse of History, will have to translate into clear and stately language for the benefit of our enlightened patrons here, the Ages-to-Come. And now you have seen my *Ballet of the Nations* under all its aspects, you will, I trust, appreciate its tragic splendour only the more for having adequately realized the paltriness of the mysterious machinery which lies behind it. This contradiction between the visible effects and the hidden cause is, indeed, one of my finest bits of poetic irony.

Ladies and gentlemen of my indulgent audience, you will, I doubt not, also appreciate all that Stage-Manager Satan owes to his varied and accomplished *personnel*. It needs the strident and crashing, yet not inharmonious, music of the Orchestra of Patriotism, the silver trumpet of Idealism and woodland horn of Adventure, the harmonium of Self-Righteousness, the rustling wings of Pity and Indignation, the youthful voice of Heroism, even the whistles and fog-horns of poor old Widow Fear and her grotesque and cruel children Suspicion and Panic, to lend attraction and dignity to what my cinematograph films and gramophone records have revealed to you. It needs . . .

DEATH (*cutting short SATAN's speech*). It needs Ballet Master Death.

DEATH, who has been lying dead drunk across the sleeping body of HEROISM, has, with a sudden clatter of his bones, lurched up into a sitting posture, clasping his knees with skeleton hands. He nods and leers with drunken fatuity at the MUSE and the AGES-TO-COME, and repeats in drunkard's tones : "It needs BALLET MASTER DEATH ! That's what it needs, my dears !" The MUSE and the AGES-TO-COME fall a step back, gathering up their garments in well-bred disgust. For, with his change of posture, it has become apparent that DEATH, who has been hitherto lying unnoticed, is the worse not only for liquor, but for all his previous exertions : the natty BALLET MASTER has turned into a tattered tramp ; his bones have worked his evening suit into rags, his wig has fallen off, and through the rents of his once smart white waistcoat and shirt there is a glimpse of something far worse than a mere skeleton.

SATAN (*with a gesture of wrath*). Silence ! you filthy carnage-drunkensot !

DEATH. Oho! "Silence," quotha? Is it "silence" your Lordship condescends to say to your poor disowned bastard now that you have let him have the honour of conducting for you your *Ballet of the Nations*, and he has made it into your greatest hit? Well, let me tell you, my respected illegitimate parent, that all your fine performers, your virtuous Passions—oh, yes, Pity and Indignation, Madame Idealism and dear little Prince Adventure, and all your Orchestra of Patriotism, would not have got a single spectator to sit through your silly performance if it had not been for Ballet Master Death and his skull and rotten bones. Who cares a damn nowadays for Satan, or Hell, or Evil? Exploded myths, all of them! I am the great Reality, who bring with me Fear and Suspicion and Panic, and Cruelty, and Hatred and the harmonium of Self-Righteousness and all the popular performers. It is Ballet Master Death, let me tell your empty transcendental Archangelship, who draws an audience!

SATAN remains speechless with anger.

DEATH (*sitting up and turning round*). Hullo! you there, Heroism, my jolly blind boy! you, at all events, have never doubted the powers of your old crony Death! Come, my lad, lend me a hand and help me on to my legs that I may go and sit on the throne of that metaphysical Archangel of a father of mine, so that the world may see that it is Ballet Master Death who runs its great dramatic shows and sets its peoples a-dancing!

HEROISM (*getting up from the ground*). Whose is that hideous braggart voice which calls upon me in the name of Death? For that is not the voice, those cannot be the words, of him I have so loved. And what . . . what, for mercy's sake, is this loathsome something I have grasped?

HEROISM, who has stretched out his arm to clasp DEATH, suddenly withdraws his hand and holds it up in astonishment and disgust.

HEROISM. Oh, what is this corruption which my fingers have met and still clings to them ?

*The MUSE and the AGES-TO-COME have retreated to the sides of the stage, SATAN to the rear. HEROISM remains alone in the middle of the stage, near DEATH, who has collapsed once more; and HEROISM holds out at arm's length his own soiled right hand.*

HEROISM. Where is the Death I loved and followed so faithfully—the true, pure, lovely Death ? Oh, horror, horror, horror !

THE MUSE. Horror ? Surely that was the name which Satan called his Ballet Master in our talk. . . . And what is all this about a “true, pure, lovely Death ?” Ah ! I remember ! I now understand it all.

HEROISM (*turning on BALLET MASTER DEATH, who now cowers, prone, in his tattered evening clothes*). And who art thou, usurping Death’s sacred name, thou Skeleton Pollution ?

*HEROISM seizes BALLET MASTER DEATH and flings him, rattling like a broken puppet, against the footlights. HEROISM then returns to the middle of the stage and stands, sobbing like a man awakened from a nightmare, and forcing open the lids of his blind eyes.*

HEROISM. Oh, for some kindly surgeon to cut away at last this veil of blindness from my eyes !

SATAN (*stooping over BALLET MASTER DEATH and shaking his broken limbs*). Damaged, but not quite done for ! A democratic wig, a complete suit of newest idealistic cut, may make him still pass muster for a while.

*BALLET MASTER DEATH wheezes responsively like a broken bellows.*

SATAN. But the most needed of all will be a brand-new set of manners: peaceful, fraternal, full of thought for the future! (*Shakes him once more.*) You vile, old-fashioned scarecrow, do you now understand that Heroism has almost found you out for the preposterous, indecent anachronism that you are? And if, by any chance, that Blind Boy should really be sur-geoned into seeing . . . why, then, this will have been the last of our Ballets of the Nations!

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NOTES TO THE PROLOGUE

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TO THE MEMORY  
OF  
MARIO CALDERONI  
*Ob. DECEMBER, 1914*  
AND ALSO OF  
CLEMENT MILES,  
*Ob. FEBRUARY, 1918*

both of them my juniors by a generation, but to  
whose conversation I owe so much of what is written  
in these notes.

*Autumn, 1919.*



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## NOTES TO THE PROLOGUE

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### WHY SATAN?

#### I

WHY have I chosen Satan for my spokesman in a discussion of what is, or is not, right ?

Seeking in the bottom of my heart, I think the answer might be : Because I am sick of hearing this war discussed from the point of view of God, as if the speaker or writer, English, French, German, American, or what not, held a brief from on high to "justify the ways of God to man" or rather to identify the ways of his own particular nation with the ways of God.

I do not know who or what God is ; but in these five years he has been called upon to back so many abominations and imbecilities, that it seems more decent not to take his name once more in vain, but rather speak of Evil in that of him who had the gentlemanly frankness to say to it "Be thou my Good." If right and wrong are to be discussed in war-time, yet with tolerable manners, it is as well to start from Evil as a great Reality, *sub specie æternitatis* ; as an Archangel immanent in the Universe, not a little brimstone-stinking devil whom, like the witnesses at witch trials, we see issuing out of the mouth of people we dislike, and they, of course, see issuing out of ours.

Besides, I am aware that it has not been from contemplating the lives of saints and sages that I have come by such notions of right and wrong as I possess ; but rather from an occasional glimpse of Satan ; and during these last years from a daily and hourly exhibition of the Waster. So it is natural and fitting that whatever these years have taught me on this subject should be set forth by a Puppet-Satan of my making, and from the point of view of this Satan's likings and dislikings.

## II

*HELL'S PAVING STONES*

Proverbial wisdom has long recognized the occasional use to which Satan puts virtue. But the good intentions with which we are told that the Power of Evil paves his abode, are described as such as come to nothing. My contention is different. For to these paving-stones, nay this ashlar of Hell, I would add the good intentions which *have* been carried out. Indeed, alas, alas, it is this very reality and solidity, this being so splendidly up to sample, not mere words and excuses but generous deeds, unstinting self-immolation, which has fitted them as material for that palace of horror, wherein the Waster of Human Virtue indulges his barren pleasure in moral beauty.

## III

*SATAN IS THE ADVERSARY*

Furthermore, I have wanted to discuss the nature of Satan with my Reader, but first and foremost with myself, because it has been borne in upon me that in Time of War we all incline to take for granted that the *Adversary is Satan*.

Please pause and notice that this placing of the three words means, by the habits of English syntax, the exact reverse of what those same three words mean when put in the contrary order, viz. ; *Satan is the Adversary*. The latter is a dogma to which even my untheological self subscribes with more than theologic fervour. Indeed my Prologue deals precisely with the reasons why Satan is, as the pious phrase goes, *the Old Enemy, the Arch-Adversary of Mankind*.

Satan, meaning thereby the essence of all Evil, defines himself to the Muse, to myself and to my future readers, as the *Power that wastes*. And, more particularly, *wastes human virtue*. In so far, he is the Adversary against whom we must all, and always, struggle with all our will and all our wits. So far so good. But now I come to my essential difference with patriotic (which is not saying "public spirited") persons in all belligerent camps alike ; an irreconcilable difference, but one too easily over-looked owing to that habit of speech by

which the mere position of two nouns decides which is the qualified and which the qualifier. For I put "Satan" first, and "Adversary" second; while *they*—the patriotic persons of all this tormented globe—invariably put "Adversary" first and "Satan" second. So that while *my* meaning is that we must never leave off struggling with Satan wheresoever he lurketh; *their* meaning is that we must in these particular present years of Grace, or Disgrace, lavish all our energy, wealth, strength, health, wit, and our virtues and all the best of our life and lives, in trying to take by the scruff of the neck (as does Pharaoh on Egyptian sculptures of B.C. 4000) and smite withal, a particular nation or group of nations, who, being at war with us for the first time in history, is at present our Adversary. A mode of proceeding which, as I have tried to show in my play, is precisely similar, and symmetrical, to that of the other party, the two (as archæologists say) *heraldically* opposed groups constituting a double deed of Waste, and as such the supreme oblation to the Power of Evil.

But this little difference, according as the sentence runs "Satan is the Adversary" or "The Adversary is Satan," repays our further scrutiny. For the inversion, the putting of an *Adversary*, i.e. a human being or group of human beings, in the place of Evil as such, happens to be one of Satan's oldest and most successful wiles, which he compasses (as I have ventured to make him explain) by means of two most serviceable minions of his, namely *Delusion* and *Confusion*. Let us look further still into the matter. Take the formula "Satan is the Adversary"; there Satan—meaning the infliction of useless loss and pain, the fruitless sacrifice (as distinguished from the enriching exchange of good) Satan, as all religions have taught, is, actually and potentially, in all and every one of us alike. Hence our chief dealings and wrestlings with that Old Enemy must be in *ourselves*. This much will be conceded theoretically by patriotic persons, who are oftenest religious and nearly always idealistic and quite devoted to duty; similarly patriotic persons can have no objection to any amount of quiet individual tussle with such impurities and covetousness as, by definition, dwell in the privacy of each human breast. But that is not what I am alluding to. I don't know whether every individual

really is impure and covetous and entirely without spiritual health in him ; that is a matter in which each is best (or perhaps worst ?) fitted to speak for himself ; anyhow it is a debatable and recondite, a delicate matter. What, on the contrary, is neither debatable nor recondite, indeed, as the French expression goes, *puts out one's eyes*, is that all Groups of human beings, Classes, Races, Corporations, Nations, etc., are bursting with all manner of folly, improvidence, selfishness, and general unwholesomeness ; just as at the same time they are replete (if in less undisguised and explosive a fashion) with every human wisdom and virtue. So that methinks it is not so much the individual's peccadilloes (best left to the neighbours, the policeman, and even to his conscience) which require collective and public dealing with, as the sins of commission and omission of the collectivity, of the various collectivities, of our class, corporation, race, nation, etc.; and of *yours*, of course, likewise. Each collectivity or group being (like each individual only much more so) a battlefield between the Powers of Good and the Powers of Evil ; each collectivity carrying in itself its proper complement of minions and emanations of Satan, against whom that same collectivity's forces of wisdom and decency can struggle unimpeded by the forces of wisdom and decency of other collectivities. Nay ; not merely *unimpeded*. For here comes in the future benefit of those railways, telegraphs, telephones, and newspapers, which so far have contributed to bring about and organize war ; the good sense and good feeling in each collectivity, its real powers of real self-defence, can unite, must and will unite, indeed (Berne 1919) *are* beginning to unite, with the similar good sense and good feeling in every other collectivity ; labour with labour, science with science, education with education, womankind with womankind ; nay, perhaps even those hitherto ambiguous forces, genius with genius, and heroism with heroism, may unite in every part of the world to diminish or forbid the various great old-established oblations to Satan : Disease, Pauperism, Overwork, Ignorance, Prostitution, Profiteering and War. For Satan is the Adversary of all of us alike. And we are all, yes, even when thousands of men have barely ceased pounding each other into putrescence, or showering

death on to slumbering or holiday towns, London or Karlsruhe; or once the fighting over, are still starving children and women into rickets or abortion ; yes, even *now* we are all of us, Britons and our Allies, and Germans and their Allies, helping one another a little (and neglecting how much more for that making of men into bloody muck !) in our joint struggle with Satan. For though they do not think of it, and would perhaps be angry at the thought, the man of science, the doctor, the nurse, the engineer, the educator, all who are not merely contributing their mite to mutual destruction, are co-operating in the diminution of evil all the world over ; grafting thought upon thought, discovery upon discovery, irrespective of national divisions, unchecked by national hatred.

Such is the meaning of the words *Satan is the Adversary*, which I would now expand, and at the same time define, into : *Satan is the common, the constant, the only real Adversary*. But meanwhile, Satan, aided by his minions Delusion and Confusion, has us all on our knees before him. For we are all thinking, or rather feeling and acting as if we thought, that the *Adversary is Satan*. We are bound to think the Adversary is Satan, or a limb thereof, whenever in private matters or in public we cease to co-operate and begin to hate. The whole conception of an Adversary, nay his very existence, is a result of strife and hatred on whatever scale. No human creature can admit that he is struggling against what is good. Whence it comes about that a human creature, which is being struggled against, can be thought of only as evil. *Struggle* meaning the intention, not to *outstrip* but to *destroy*. Struggle is merely the active, one might almost say the *muscular*, aspect of fear, envy, or loathing, all of which imply that we judge and call its object *evil*. Thus, if I call Waste and Barren Sacrifice *Satan*, it is because I hate it ; because my mind and my nerves become tense with desire to destroy at the bare thought of it.

But, surely, the Adversary may be, *may really be*, evil, satanic ? Of course, and that is my contention. Not only that the very fact of being struggled against makes him *seem* evil, but, what is different but equally inevitable, that the fact of being struggled against and struggling makes him

become evil. For while competition can and should be the attempt to surpass others in value, thereby bringing about increase of good rather than destruction; self-defence, on the contrary (which is a frequent method of *evading* competition between classes, nations and individuals and even sexes), not only presupposes the threat of destruction, but involves the use of it; all the talk about the *rules of the game, gentlemanly warfare*, even *humanely waged warfare*, merely accentuating, in the attempt to mask, the fact that war intends to damage, ruin, humiliate, or coerce a set of people who are equally bent on damaging, ruining, humiliating, and coercing us. In this sense nothing is truer than that once you have got or made an Adversary, the Adversary in question becomes Satan; becomes so in reality and deed, more and more with every additional hour of war. Only we should remember (if such remembering during war-time were not as impossible as living head downwards!) that by the nature of the case there are always two Adversaries, each Adversary to the other; and consequently necessarily *two* Satans. Two sets of people, alas, employed on Satan's business of wasting human wealth and life and human virtue. And also two sets of people each feeling, and feeling sure, that the other *is* Satan.

That is a very horrible and horribly preposterous, but alas, very natural, inevitable, state of affairs. And one of the worst things about this bad business of war is that when each nation thinks its Adversary (or its Adversary's figure-head, Kaiser, Admiral Tirpitz, Tsar, M. Poincaré, Mr. Lloyd-George, or even poor Sir Edward Grey!) is *Satan*, that nation in so far forgets that its essential and permanent Adversary is Satan himself; forgets the follies, abuses, and manifold omissions and commissions with which its welfare and its progress are threatened from *within*. For Satan, my dear brethren, dwelleth within the innermost heart (or shall we say belly or brain?) of every nation; and that accounts, perhaps, for his anxiety to turn every warring nation's attention away from its own internal affairs, and for the trouble he is at to make it seek the Principle of Evil in an Adversary outside itself.

But as to me, my political creed daily narrows itself more and more to a single article, viz. *Satan is the Adversary*.

And whensoever, in small things or in large, that dictum gets stood on its head, becoming "the Adversary is Satan," then, in public relations as in private, and for whatever time, long or short, there is either a hecatomb of human victims, or a censer-full of blinding, stinking, nonsense; or, strange and sad to tell, maybe a grain or two of sweet and precious human virtue offered on Evil's altar.

## IV

*WHY NOT HAVE MENTIONED GOD?*

One point more. When Peace shall have restored the world's normal religious intolerance, critics different from those of to-day may take umbrage at another heterodoxy of my drama. Why have omitted decently to put as *vis-à-vis* to my odious Satan some God, such as comforts Mr. Wells' Bishop and Mr. Wells' self: a Power making for goodness, and adorably irresponsible for the world's evil, moreover pleasantly personal, a moral captain, or at all events, shall we say? a captain of moral industry. My answer is: that while recognizing the grandeur of an old-fashioned, inscrutable Creator of All things, I find no use for a Divinity as helplessly well meaning as ourselves. I know the power of goodness and of wisdom, power not with a capital P, but with real efficacy; power not *making for goodness*, but power, transmuting power, *of goodness*; and therefore of Goodness' other aspect, Wisdom. I have seen and loved and reverenced that power of goodness and wisdom, been comforted thereby, and hoped in it. But I have recognized it in *Man*; or rather in *men*, or rather in men and women; or rather in moments, sides, and, thank heaven! in deeds, thoughts and works, of individual men and women. It is this power of goodness and wisdom which I see perpetually whittling away at the Kingdom of Satan. It is, as I have made Satan remark, not God, but Man and Man's wife Woman, who have rescued some of the precious seed scattered even as by the Sower in the Gospel; and made the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil strike root and rise and spread, very much to the detriment of Hell's foundations and strongholds. That knowledge of good and evil should be

set in mankind's poor little garden, and not in the paradise-park of any divinity, is surely evident, since *good and evil* is a distinction essential to mankind's feelings, but not, so far as one can judge, of equal interest to the universe as a whole, whereof Man and his feelings are such a microscopic and ephemeral, though to Man himself legitimately supreme, portion. That we should all have enjoyed the acquaintance of a Being, especially an immortal, godlike Being, made up of absolutely nothing but what *we* deem goodness and wisdom, is natural ; it is on a par with our general craving for *more* of anything desirable, with our abhorrence of interruption, and of tiresome discrimination, and disappointment, and short commons of all kinds. It is on a par with the secret hope, each of us cherishes, of finding a teacher solely and always in the right, a friend entirely devoted, a lover eternally faithful. It is natural we should wish for all such perfect fulfilment of our desires, but natural just because it is not to be had for the wishing. Let us by all means make ourselves such idols of the hearts' desire ; Jesus, or his divine Mother, or Buddha ; or whatever other name these Consolers bear. But let us recognize them, like their less ambiguous equivalents given by architecture, music and poetry, to be of Man's own holy making. And recognize at the same time that Wisdom and Goodness are qualities, however scanty and however alloyed, in men and women, there to be benefited by, loved and wondered at ; and above all reverently but clearly discriminated from whatever, in those same men and women, is *not* wisdom and goodness, but such uncleanness of mind, narrowness of sympathy and unsteadiness of nerves as Satan goes on employing for our discomfiture.

That—I mean thinking in this way—is why, while subordinating the Power which spoils and wastes to the Creative All, whom Man calls God or Nature, I have been able to set opposite to my cruel amateur of hecatombs of virtue no “Power of Goodness” ; but only plain men and women, with whatsoever goodness and wisdom, which means power for their own and others' happiness and betterment, they may contain, like veins of precious metal, in their obscure and earthly composition.

*Christmas, 1917; Easter, 1919.*

### THE PRESENT MOMENT

THE MUSE (*loquitur*). “*The present moment is eminently propitious. . . . Mankind has attained amazing control over Science's means without an inkling of Science's discipline and aims. Twentieth-century men appear to be slum-and-office savages retaining the worship of all the good old tribal fetishes and racy obscene emblems . . . under newfangled and decent names ; yet wielding appliances which, without enlarging mind or heart, abolish space and multiply all brutish powers a thousandfold.*”

It would be consonant with the mental habits of Clio, and of the sociological philosophers whom that Muse has admitted to her canteen of anecdotes, rhetoric and moralizings, to look out for a single cause responsible for this war, in other words someone or something to slang for it. And many of us would, like H. G. Wells, have fallen foul of our own unworthy days, if *German militarism* had not offered itself as an even more handy scapegoat.

I want it to be understood that the War, and its witch-hunt for Responsibilities, has checked in me the habit of relieving discomfort by fault-finding. And particularly of finding fault with our own, heaven knows, sufficiently punished times, which, for all their shortcomings, are on the whole no worse than preceding ones, let alone that preceding ones begot them, begotten in their turn by other wretchednesses, an endless series of generations like that of the Patriarchs.

Having thus dissociated myself from Clio's habitual search for Historical Responsibilities, I wish to express my entire agreement in all she says about our times being propitious for Satan's Gala Performance ; more by token that I have gone out of my way to make her say it. Not a link of “Guilt” is what connects the two ; but a link of common characteristics, due to common origins, and helping us to understand the war by the peace which preceded it. For to expose life and limbs, affections and security, in the international muddles of High Personages, financial or bureaucratic, is after all but the

catastrophic equivalent of spending one's days in crowded, unwholesome and hideous places, doing fatiguing, monotonous work, with only betting, cinemas, a yearly visit to Blackpool, the daily pub and weekly chapel for spiritual refreshment. And the war's spectacular sudden violation of all legitimate claims upon existence is but the cataclysmal heaping up, nations rearing on to each other like express trains in collision, of what is accepted as normal when spread out in every-day recurrence. Both signify that larger and larger masses of mankind have been compressed into an automatic mechanism which checks the play of preference, and imposes dull or deluded acquiescence in what is abhorrent to one's instincts.

As was already reiterated by Ruskin and Morris, the streets and factories of our cities, and the desecrated landscape surrounding them, are an outward and visible sign of an inner and spiritual disgrace. Not a symbol merely, but a specimen and a proof, of the paralysis of will and judgment now exhibiting its acute and paroxysmal phase in the material and mental happenings of this war.

This is not saying that our times are worse than any previous ones. Let me repeat what I remarked at the beginning of this note, that such pitting of Past against Present or Present against Past is among the futile exercises wherewith our friend Clio helps us to work off, with no further result, our dissatisfaction or (*vide* Macaulay's frequent descriptions of his own Golden Age of 1830-50) our silly self-satisfaction. It does not matter whether the Past is better than the Present or *vice versa*. What does is the recognition that the Present is just as bad as it happens to be ; and of the share which the Past with its heredities, bodily and social, has had in producing the Present's good and bad points ; for only through such recognition can we add our knowledge and our choice and our effort to the other factors determining the Future.

This is why, though rarely agreeing with the Muse of History, I have made use of her to point out that the enormity of our war is part and parcel of the enormity of our previous peace.

I use the word *Enormity* advisedly ; because, while implying what is painful and against the grain of life, it emphasizes the question of scale, of size, numbers, pace, the element of

mere addition and multiplication, which gives to all modern evil its particular vast and crushing unwieldiness ; and that immense balance of waste over benefit, with which our war is smiting even the dullest imagination. Now this question of scale strikes me as all important, for the sudden enlargement therein, the unprecedented, unexpected, uncompensated increase in geographical extension, impact of force, swiftness of communication, hence material and mental exploitation and all we proudly call " power over nature " and " human organization," has been quite disproportionate to any increase in the spiritual capacity of dealing with all these things, meaning by *spiritual* the power of preference, understanding, and purpose. And this disproportion may, for aught we know, and as our war seems rather to show, be horribly on the increase with the further increase of what is called *applied science*, meaning science applied to material powers (not necessarily material welfare !) but not at all applied to man's powers of thinking and choosing. Indeed many of our professional guides and philosophers have been remarking on this disproportion, though not including reference to themselves and their teachings and preachings, which I should like to insist upon. For this modern and perhaps growing disproportion, like most others in human affairs, rests on the simple basis that *some things pay and others don't* ; and that, as man requires to live on bread before he can live on higher nutriment, those things which *pay* will, at any given time, tend to engross all efforts ; while those which *don't* will, like the persons who starve upon them, tend to be discarded. As illustration of this and of the causes of our own so different state of affairs, let me remind the reader (without one moment's suggestion that early Hellas may have been a pleasanter place than latter-day Britain !) that in the palmy days of Heraclitus and Empedocles, their contemporary Croesus did not owe his famous millions to any application of physics and chemistry to geological discoveries in Asia Minor, for the sufficient reason that no one had so far even heard of any of such sciences ; while on the other hand (and the ears of priests and magistrates not having yet grown sensitive to heresy) there was a deal of kudos to be got, let alone no end of entertainment, out of

teachings and discussions such as laid the foundations, once for all, of scientific thought. Now, in our days, matters are exactly reversed. For in our days it happens that the application of science to material concerns enormously enriches the Croesususes who buy up or exploit what we call "inventions," meaning machines and drugs and such like; while, on the other hand, the application of science, that is of the methods of thinking which science has elaborated, to concerns of the mind, no less obviously diminishes the emoluments and reputable leisure of those whom the theological and scholastic past has bequeathed as the guardians and trustees of our spiritual welfare. This being the case for over a century and a half, and *sempre crescendo*, science, we remark with pride, has been busy transforming the world in such a way that our own great-grandfathers, let alone those Ionian and Sicilian Sages and Croesus King of Lydia, would scarcely recognize it. For there is nothing, almost, we cannot do, on earth, on water, or in air, excepting do the work and live in the way which we should like. Transformation of the world? A three-hour journey by the Midland, or Great Central Railway, even a tram-excursion into Greater London, leaves no doubt of that, particularly after looking over the English water-colour landscapes of early Turner days. And our life, as we add with even sincerer pride, is transformed no less. Indeed the vast majority of lives now crowded into those ever-increasing rows of airless, viewless, joyless streets, have, for the last hundred years, themselves come into being by the creative *fiat* of applied science's beneficent and increasing demand for labour in the collieries and mills, and other *bouillons de culture* where (however unsuspected by those industrious generations themselves) our teeming contemporary *Homunculi* are produced, just as Goethe's imaginary specimen *Homunculus* was generated in Faust's crucible. And since I have mentioned Goethe, let me exemplify the prodigious increase of scale, size, numbers, and particularly *pace*, due to the lucrative character of science when applied solely to material objects, by pointing out that we moderns should require to symbolize Time the Bringer-of-Change is an Express-driver, a Chauffeur, and latterly an Airman; whereas, writing in the days

of Watt and Arkwright, he 'found nothing more expressive of the furious speed of Kronos than to compare him with a postillion bobbing six miles an hour in front of a post-chaise.

All this amounts to saying that machinery has grown ; and mankind grown not so much with, meaning proportionately, as *into it*. Mankind's thought and imagination and will and effort have grown, precisely fitted, to that machinery's requirements ; grown thanks to machines themselves, to telegraphs, telephones, marconigrams, and even those latest mechanical toys which display to all belligerent stay-at-homes bowdlerized battles and film-faked atrocities almost at the very minute of their taking place. Nor by positive methods only, but by more potent negative ones of omission and suppression : ideas, wishes, facts allowed diffusion only in so far as their diffusion increases, without producing friction, the immeasurable, complicated automatism of our thoroughly mechanized existence.

And here some of my friends will at once recognize in this description the apocalyptic monster Capitalism. . . . Alas, that is not what I am alluding to. I say "alas," for *Capitalism*, the entirely wicked and marvellously simple monster they talk about, would long ago have had its neck wrung, belonging as it does to the race of dragons made of printed paper. Whereas the automatic monster I am describing could flourish equally under, say, the scientific socialism of the Webbs ; and will, unfortunately, survive, by dint of applied science and scientific organization, through a great number of political transformations, using them up, indeed, like the much-boomed transformation of the France of the Monarchy into the France of the Third Republic, and the England of Cobbett into the England of the Harmsworths. I even suspect that the very belief in what those friends of mine call Capitalism, and the belief that you need only seize the accursed Jabberwock by the neck, and after a brief snick-a-snack of Democracy's worple-blade, that mankind will arise free and rejoicing—I even suspect that this cry against Capitalism, though undoubtedly beneficial as representing criticism and revolt, is largely machine-made—another shoddy, standardized product of that application of Science to material problems only, and to

those, above all, which *pay*. However this may be, and however stupid and wasteful the War of Classes which will replace this present War of Nations, I return to my contention that the latter—I mean the War of Nations—is of the same origin and the same substance as the horrible houses in which most men and women at present live, the factories they overwork in, the public-houses and betting-sports in which they take their recreation: the expression, not of alert preferences and intelligent effort, but of machine-made acquiescence. And the war, with its unanimity of wasteful sacrifice, has shown that the multitude have as little outlook into Reality as they have view from their windows; and that it is no easier for them to unclog their minds than to wash their bodies. For in a civilization like ours you can only hear what has been previously read; you can only read what has been printed and published; you can print and publish only what has sufficient appeal to be sold off quickly and in larger and larger editions; just as you can only elect political representatives who have organizations behind them; neither more nor less than you can eat and drink only what the other kind of caterers find it remunerative to sell you. And all of them, caterers and catered for, financiers as well as proletarians, journalists and readers, governments and governed, teachers and taught, are all equally the variously specialized interlocking and standardized parts of that vast automatism which has resulted less from human preference and purpose than from the suddenly discovered economic fatalities of chemical substances and mechanical processes.

In this automatism, in all other respects more like a machine than a living organism, there lurks, however, the saving grace of sensitiveness to pain and pleasure; and hence the power of adaptation. This being so, we may be sure that, even at this moment, there is evolving some small unsuspected organ or quality, most likely a by-product, even as the human hand and jaw and hence the human brain were once by-products of adaptations in lower creatures; some unseen factor destined to alter for the better this dreadful latter-day organism wherein man's muscles and man's mind, and the sinews and food and lubricants of machines, are interlocking

co-ordinated parts, and whose latest achievement we can watch in our war.

I will not flatter the self-importance of all of us intellectuals, by calling that still unnoticed, that transforming, rudiment of a saner and nobler life by the old name of *Thought* or *Will*. For of what has hitherto been meant by *Thought* and *Will* there has been plenty and to spare in these days ; only it has been made by the same machinery and methods as our shoddy clothes, our jerry-built houses and our unsparingly perfected and thoroughly efficient engines of military destruction ; *Thought* busy excogitating justifications and elaborating myths ; *Will* trained to sacrifice, drilled to hatred of enemy nations this year, perhaps of enemy classes, next. I do not pretend to know what this rudimentary and hidden organ of human betterment may turn out to be ; still less what changes in the outer environment, and in what French biologists call the *inner milieu*, may help to evolve and thereby give our life a new shape and new activities. Only I will add this much : that seeing, as I do, in science the most recent and least imperfect embodiment of experience and thought, I cannot believe that it will continue everlasting merely to fetch and carry, to produce cheaper commodities and more expensive armaments, for creatures remaining so unacquainted with its essential nature as never to guess that, instead of such a hireling drudge, science could be the disciplining educator of all our thought, and, through our thought, the guide of our action and the arbiter of our impulses.

## WORDS, WORDS, AND EVERMORE WORDS

## I

This speech of Satan's might lead you to imagine that I look upon my fellow-writers as a mischievous set of people, and perhaps even a dishonest one. As regards their occasional mischievousness my view cannot be brought under a simple *is* or *is not*, but involves considerable intricacies of explanation, with which the reader shall be duly puzzled. The question of dishonesty can be answered with a resolute denial.

The war, which has taught me so much, has confirmed an old suspicion of mine, viz., that so far from taking for granted that opinions diametrically opposed to one's own cannot be honestly held, the preposterousness of other people's views (or what strikes one as such) ought to be a warrant that these views *are* honestly held; are, in short, the natural, spontaneous, almost inevitable effects of certain circumstances upon certain minds, temperaments and educations. Delusion and Confusion do the trick; and nothing could be more honest than these ingenuous and ingenious ministers of Satan. Ninety-nine times out of a hundred, opinions are what recent psychology calls "rationalizations," explanations to others, but first and foremost to one's own rational self, of impulses, attitudes and habits existing previously, and whose genetic reason (as distinguished from their excuse) must be sought in the great Reasonableness of Things which has made men into machines driven by instincts and passions but furnished with brakes, by no means automatic or always efficient, of rational thought. In other words, and save where intolerance has produced self-defensive hypocrisy, the psychological fact appears to be that we human creatures can be trusted to hold in all sincerity whatever opinions best conform to our own feelings and, in so far, our interests. And if you ask me how I can apply the word *sincerity* in such connexions, my answer is that the sincerity is proved by the difficulty which those who hold these views experience in believing that the opposite ones can be other than dishonest. The disbelief in our

opponents' intellectual honesty is the measure of our own infatuation. Thus the person who at this moment believes that "pacifists" *must* be sold to the Enemy is a person whose convictions cannot be other than sincere.

*Autumn, 1918.*

## II

### "TIS AN AWKWARD THING TO PLAY WITH SOULS"

As regards the mischief done by us writers—since what I am going to say applies equally to me, although, like my confrères I naturally do not know *when* or *where* it applies, any more than I know the precise *when* and *where* of my future demise, but only that since all humans must needs die, I also, being human, must die like the rest of us. . . . Well ! the thing I want to say about the mischievous nature of us people who write, applies not so much to *writers* as to *writing*. The danger, the actual and frequent mischief, is not in us as mere human beings, although the talent for expression may conceivably imply lack of reserve, lack of self-scrutiny and of responsibility—the mischief is in the art of words as such. And if, as I venture to suggest, we writers are an occasional danger to the community, this is, in my opinion, simply because we are working with dangerous materials and dangerous tools ; and, what is worse, usually without an inkling of their dangers. Our intentions are honest. "*But 'tis an awkward thing to play with souls and matter enough to save one's own,*" for, like that hero of Browning's, our attempts at influencing others, or at least the methods at our disposal, are fraught with drawbacks. Simply because the writer's (or orator's) attempt to gain others to his views and to influence their choice and behaviour, is a tampering, not so much with souls, though that is part of our endeavour, but a tampering with *truth*.

## III

### THE ART OF PERSUASION

I shall often return to my belief that one of the uses of Art has been, not only to make up for the shortcomings of Reality,

but also, and in proportion to the boldness of its departure therefrom, to accustom us to the essential difference between *what we like* and *what happens to exist*. The arts appealing to the eye, and even more so architecture and music, have thus taken up their stand opposite to, independent and respectful of, Reality; enabling us as also to respect and turn aside from it. I am sorry to say that the art of words, and especially my own dear art of prose writing, has been less conducive to intellectual integrity. Owing to its origin in speech, which means explanation and persuasion, it has never ceased tampering with our recognition of Reality. Not in the sense of romancing, of presenting false pictures of life, as poor old M. Brunetière accused it of doing. Rather in the far graver sense of falsifying values while remaining in the ostensible service of truth. For all literary processes, all rhetoric, all syntax, nay, all words such as they stand in the dictionary, are fraught with emotional "values," taking the word "*values*" as it is done in regard to painting. In every act of speaking or writing, *values* of attraction and repulsion, of implicit judgment, praise and blame, are being insidiously, unwittingly employed (note how I have unintentionally prejudged the case by the mere word "*insidiously*" !) by the speaker or writer, who is believed, and oftenest believes himself, to be expounding and displaying realities. All literature is nothing but such a juggling with emotional *values*, such turning a statement into a pattern, into a piece of music, each with its emotional coercion, with its imperative appeal to preference and aversion. How could it be otherwise ? Has not literature, poetry, rhetoric, originated in the Temple and the Law Court, the Commemoration Feast and the Forum ? To exalt, to praise, to awaken contrition, to bias judgment ; to "*persuade*," to "*convert*" to sway men's decisions—that has been its business. The art of words has done comparatively little, and that little has always been alloyed with emotional purpose, in the way of mere stating, of recording ; still less in the way of *bona fide* explaining, as distinguished from explaining away.

Of this, and by dint of doing it all day long, those who address the public in written or spoken words are scarcely aware. We do indeed know that, on special occasions, we are trying

to make our readers and audience feel, and prepare to act, in the manner desired by ourselves. What we do not guess is that we are never doing anything else. For the human soul is so made that it becomes aware of its own ceaseless play of feeling only when that results in preparation for action ; we know, as it were, when we jump up and wish to embrace or attack, even more when we check our limbs from doing either ; we do not usually know the constant minute alterations in circulation and respiration and nervous tension which accompany or constitute what is called *feeling* ; still less are we aware of the mysterious changes in brain and nerves which give what we call our *mental attitude* towards this or that. Now, even when there is no intention of influencing men's choice, that is to say men's behaviour, there nevertheless is, on the part of all speech and all writing, an unceasing manipulation of all these unnoticed possibilities of feeling and attitude : they are the very material of all literary effect ; and the essential rhythms, far deeper down and more potent than any perceived by the ear, which are the writer's or speaker's materials, are the rhythms of our affections. Such is the power of words ; by the side of which all the vaunted powers of music, Orpheus, Saint Cecilia, Alexander's Feast and all, are coarse, intermittent, easily guarded against, and evanescent. For what matters is not the occasional and obvious stirring to madness or tears ; but the constant unnoticed fingering and shaping of our judgments, our preferences and our prejudices.

This, however, is only half of the matter ; the matter being the unconscious mendacity inherent in all verbal expression. Unlike music, words do not manipulate mere feeling, so to speak, *in vacuo*. Words summon up memory-images ; they deal with *qualities*, with *things* existing outside us, towards which those preferences and attitudes are turned. And it is in virtue of this constant reference to *things* that literature's playing upon our feelings so often becomes a tampering with our sense of realities. Words tell us of a world outside ourselves ; but in so doing turn that world's relations within itself into relations to our likings and dislikings. Hence words have been the chief instruments both of Confusion and of Delusion.

## IV

This war, wherein words have played their part alongside high explosives and poison-gases—this war has made me think that since literature implies the readjustment (and consequent possible falsifying) of all emotional and imaginative values, it is a trade which can be decently plied only by people fully aware of these dangerous possibilities, and trained to recognize that, far from making them (as we writers all feel ourselves) priests of a God, it tends to turn us into the mouthpiece of our own and other folks' slovenly thought, inveterate prejudices and unrecognized semi-submerged passions.

To which I would add that, as so often happens, the old, primæval superstitions seem to have treated as material and mechanical realities what we are recognizing for subjective and spiritual ones. There really does exist indeed something like *Mana* and something like *magic*, in so far as every human being is streaming out suggestions to every other human being; and that, at every serious contingency of life, the world inside us, as savages believe the world outside, is filled with strange influences and evil powers, whereof words and shapes and images are the medium ; so that, unless he whose special vocation it is to deal with these dangerous things learns to approach his work in a humble spirit and with a heart purified by self-scepticism, those rites of his, instead of fostering whatsoever forces for good may lie latent in our thoughts and emotions, will merely let loose the deceiving demons who hide in our own soul and in that of all other men and women; moreover, feeding them with fumes of obscure memories and frenzy of sacrifice, give over the outer world also and all its goodness to their destructive and defiling rage. Not the air and the waters and the earth's upturned soil, nor the grass and the forests, nor the moon and the stars, are, as our ancestors thought, full of unseen and malevolent spiritual dwellers ; but a place more mysterious and perilous, namely, the spirit of man, where they lurk unsuspected, and issue forth working subtle or terrific havoc. The spells by which they are let loose are *words*. And the thoughtless magician's apprentice, the unhallowed hierophant, who plays with them, is the man or

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woman whom we pay to teach us, preach to us, and, above all,  
to write.

July, 1917.

## V

I do not know whether we people who have (or deem ourselves to have) the gift of words are, or are not, more impulsive, less restrained, than our mute inglorious readers ; this war seems to have shown that there is not much to choose in this way between them and us. What is certain, though less noticed, is that feelings, passions and all the imaginative apparatus connected with them, are the material in which, quite as much as in words, we writers work, and by working get what matters as much as daily bread or kudos, the satisfaction of the imperious needs of our special talents. This has been urged against actors ; even musicians are suspected of cultivating their own passions in order to play upon the passions of their hearers. I don't know about actors. As to musicians, I hold them to be among mankind's greatest benefactors, just because they arouse and satisfy feelings while doing so in *vacuo*, or rather in a region disconnected with thought, belief, and, in so far, with action. Unluckily, literature is a dual art ; and writers, specially in prose, are a hybrid race dealing in passion on the one hand and in reasons on the other ; with the result, that nine times out of ten, the reasons are the mere excuses for passion, and the means of giving passions a longer lease of life, a more stable and reputable tenure than if left to themselves. You can test this by comparison with music ; even the kind which (by gross exaggeration) is credited with action on people's "immoral" tendencies, does as a fact go in at one ear and come out at the other : Timotheus stops his strumming, and forthwith Alexander stops waving his torch about ; besides on that occasion (*vide* Dryden) Alexander had been feasting on more than music. Once Wagner's insidious harmonies and diffluent melodies have djed away, the audience returns to stockbroking, to *chiffons* and the practice of respectability. No one has collected the statistics of adultery at Bayreuth as compared with those of the Bach-Festival at Leipzig. And

if those statistics *did* prove greater leniency to conjugal irregularity after the one performance than the other, there remains to discount the effect of the story, the scenic representation, the situation of, say, *Tristan* or *Kundry*; above all, the *words*. For words (since I am back at words), besides arousing feelings, deal in description, in judgment and in praise or blame; words are what makes standards and codes and also unmakes them. The really dangerous part of literature is that, besides awakening passion, it justifies it. Now the justification, with its reasonable formulation, remains after the feeling has gone; let alone that it takes away the mistrust, that fear of the overwhelming, the dæmonic, which civilization has bred into all human beings much (*pace* Freud and his neurotics) to the general advantage. That element of literature which it has in common with music will rouse the longing to do and dare, to expand one's individuality, face danger, and incidentally, knock someone on the head, or wreck his furniture. And the element which literature shares with thought, observation, generalization and plain common-sense, instantly ups, exclaiming: "The cause for which you do all this is a just, a holy one," etc., when, in a good many cases, there is no cause at all, nothing about which justice or holiness can be predicated. Let us never forget that being rational creatures we employ our reason for the purpose nearest our heart, namely, to put us in conceit with our feelings, to make a show of asking for their passport, and in so doing give them a *laissez passer* to do whatever they please.

With this goes that every writer, just because he is a writer, becomes an expert in everything which can perform this double office. A writer has a training, an inborn intuition, not only in handling words as such, but in persuading, acting on the mind, of his readers. And he naturally loves the exercise and the material of his art; he likes all that is impressive, memorable, pathetic, noble, new, surprising, splendid, overpowering. Even if not born a creature of impulse (and of this I see no evidence), he is, *cæteris paribus*, pretty sure to become one in the course of exercising his art. The more so that his art has not half as much as architecture, music, and painting, the purely æsthetic, formal, impersonal appeal. Unable to

build his Abt Vogler's temple out of sounds, or out of the soarings and expansions of lines and surfaces, or the irresistible combinations of colours, he is perpetually falling back upon ethical qualities for his æsthetic effects. Now it is not good for morals, they belonging to the life of Reality, to be treated as material for the æsthetic life of appearances. There are indeed qualities in common to the two domains ; *e.g.*, energy, balance, restraint and lucidity ; but these are the qualities which literature seeks least, which tell least and which cannot compete with the facile, the brass-band or accordion, effects to be got out of heroism or the melting emotions. So the two latter, and everything of that kind, becomes, willy-nilly, the writers' habitual material. That is one reason, among others, why writers are so often prophets and moralists. . . .

## VI

There is, of course, further mischief, or possibility of mischief, in a circumstance independent of the essential nature of words and the art of using them : namely, in the particular status which we writers have taken over from our predecessors, the prophets, priests, spiritual directors and doctors of the Church. The mischief that, instead of seeing ourselves as mere searchers after truth, implying thereby that we have not yet got, and perhaps may never get, hold of it, we take for granted that truth is already in our keeping, with the consequent duty of bringing others to its due recognition. Moreover that what we have is the whole truth, or at least nothing but the truth. And that is scarcely likely. The harm we do is not merely that we employ methods of persuasion, *i.e.*, of biasing feeling and re-arranging facts, and of juggling with *values* ; it is also that we employ these literary arts under the conviction that we are imparting eternal verities. Like the sacred books of all religions we still say : *It is* ; instead of employing the formula, unsuitable for prophets and sibyls, but eminently suited to ourselves ; *I think that it is*.

### DELUSION

. . . my twin servants *Delusion* and *Confusion*, or, in other words, *Passion* seeing everything through its own likes and dislikes, and *Dullness* never seeing anything at all. p. 14.

#### I

It does not take a Rebel Archangel to point out that our views of people, things and events are coloured and distorted, proportions and perspective queered, details turned into essentials, and results shoved into the place of causes, everything made plausible and monstrous, by the passions of him who thinks he sees all as it really is. We are daily making the remark about our neighbours ; and occasionally, as when the lover has fallen out of love, even about our past selves. And we all know that it is the essence of Delusion not to be suspected by those in whom it happens to be present.

What requires adding to this venerable commonplace is that Delusion may be born of other passions than those that take their seats in Satan's Ochestra or in the Heavenly Choirs of Theologic Virtues, or, for that matter, in the zoological cages wherein moralists have always wished to pen them. The passions (or *feelings* or *instincts*, the whole nomenclature is inadequate) with which we have thus been made familiar, are as separate from one another, each in its conventional costume and bearing its appropriate symbol, as are the Harlequins and Prince Charmings and Columbines and Ogres in a pantomime. They have attracted the notice of moralists because their presence is manifested in behaviour which mankind, and mankind's supernatural delegates, have had a direct interest in checking or fostering. Besides they work their will in the broad daylight of the outer world. To see them, there has been no need for peering into the dim fluctuations of the human soul ; no need for seeking them in and as themselves : you could recognize the presence of Love by following the glance of the lover at the beloved ; that of hatred by marking the clenched fists and the scowl, the sudden

attack on its victim. In fact the passions were known by the actions they inspired or the object they were directed to. Similarly, it was recognized, ever since always, that these passions begat delusions, because these delusions were also manifested in outer conduct: Titania fondling the ass's head and Quixote spurring after the basin on the barber's head, made it plain that the eyes of romantic love and of adventurous vain-glory are apt to see persons and things quite unlike what they are.

That this happens is, as already remarked, a commonplace unworthy of an up-to-date Satan. Even Clio has learned that false prophets have been, at times, sincere; and wholesale murderers, like Robespierre, full of genuine humanitarian sentiments. What Satan has neglected to add, and Clio (and the thinkers nursed on her classic knees) not yet guessed, is that a formidable amount of Delusion has less direct and unmistakable origins and results; is born and bred not in that conventional carnival of Passions with definite features and well-known attributes, playing their ugly or exquisite pranks in full view of the assembled neighbourhood; but has mysteriously arisen from obscure, changing yet undying, feelings, primordial and protean like those marine creatures which are round or oblong, transparent or opaque, single individual or colony, parent or split-off offspring, plant or animal, all turn about; feelings whose habitation is as deep down and as obscure as any sea bottom, indeed the incommunicable regions of the human soul, which each of us may guess at in his fellows, but know directly only in his own self.

## II

I have just said that Delusion is begotten of other passions than those which, manifesting themselves in outer actions, have engrossed the attention of moralists. Indeed there are feelings, emotions, preferences, and aversions which, at least in civilized mankind, affect the outer world only indirectly through beliefs and opinions. Their glance is turned inwards; and they deal with the contents of our inner world, arranging

ideas, memories and judgments into a dwelling wherein they can expand freely or rest at ease.

Expansion and rest ; to these primary inner needs it might be possible to trace back some of the most imperious of those self-regarding impulses which, in their turn, beget so much Delusion. The soul requires to put forth its energy, and suffers by that energy's being thwarted ; but it also requires to recuperate, to economize, and suffers by undue expenditure. These two requirements result in feelings which compensate, and sometimes contradict, each other ; sometimes also bear the mark of their double origin. Thus it is with all the various forms of self-assertion and all the various forms of acquiescence : the tendency to think oneself as good as one's neighbours, or somewhat better ; to think of everything which one calls one's *own*, family, class, country, as partaking of that superiority ; on the other hand, the fear of isolation, of being left out in the cold, of being ridiculous, abnormal ; whence the fact that humiliation may seem worse than death. These are among our deepest-down social feelings ; but there seem to be other ones more intimate still, regarding only our solitary self and its intrinsic conditions : the joy of recognizing oneself up to the mark, efficient, harmonious, self-consistent, inwardly secure, warm in self-familiarity ; and, contrasted with all those ineffable satisfactions, the pain of feeling *below par*, baulked, impotent, diminished, disrupted, at variance with oneself. . . . Such are some of the needs and impulses, the uncatalogued passions not manifested directly in outer behaviour to our neighbours, and which, if guessed at by those neighbours, are guessed only in so far as already familiar to them in their own hidden selves.

Indeed, they belong essentially to ourselves. And since they would be in perpetual clash with the same sort of cravings in other individuals, let alone in conflict with the averaged standards set up by social compromise, they needs remain individual, secret, unformulated in words, uncommunicated to others ; hence, ninety-nine times out of a hundred, unavowed to ourselves. But such lack of open recognition merely establishes their paramount tyranny ; they are oligarchies and dynasties without a name, divinities without a temple,

yet forever receiving a hidden sacrifice of commonsense and truth. They are among the inner Categorical Imperatives, a deal more imperative, and perhaps more categorical, than poor Immanuel Kant, older than society, more primordial than property or parenthood, perhaps than sex ; sprung from whatever is at the bottom of all these : not the activity of this part of the brain or that, not even the turgescence of this or that set of organs, but (one cannot help suspecting) the expansion and contraction, the plenitude and exhaustion, the affinities and repulsions, in fact whatever makes the essential rhythms of substance ; who knows ? reducible perhaps to the chemistry of the universe. Be this as it may, these imperious, violent or subtle forces of the soul, protean, lacking all definite name and all consistent aspect, hidden by and to ourselves, have been disregarded by psychologists and moralists, save a few mystics specializing in the soul's adventures, and one or two cynics like La Rochefoucault, Stendhal, Butler and Nietzsche. Such being the case, when we express in words or in behaviour their needs and orders, we call them by the name of something else, attributing their works to other motives. We allege impersonal reasons ; we point to outer and alien explanations. We say : *it is*, implying by *it* the character of our neighbours, the peculiarity of circumstances, the laws of thought, the constitution of the Universe ; when if we told, if we could tell, the truth, we should say : *I want, I need, I wish, I feel.* We look in the opposite direction ; look at things upside down and with reversed perspective and colour, concave for convex, green for red and black for white. That means that we delude ourselves. And to the endless protean Delusions of which they are the cause, we add a crowning self-delusion : that of believing that we have no such feelings, passions, impulses, and needs, or that they happen to be in abeyance at the moment of speaking.\*

\* Much of all this is insisted on by the Freudians ; and their insistence on hidden springs of our thought and action is, to my view, their great gift to psychology. Where I venture to disagree entirely with them is in the contents of the above passage, which sets forth my belief that all these obscure psychological phenomena have their explanation in something more primordial than sex.

## III

*Seeing things through the colouring, the distorting medium of passion.* . . . This familiar metaphor helped me to something I wanted to talk about. Now it must be discarded because, being only partially correct, it prevents my saying what I still require to say. Luckily it so happens that showing the inadequacy of this metaphor may help us to a correcter view of the whole question of Delusion.

Let me therefore begin by saying that passion is not in the least a pane of coloured glass through which the mind looks at the universe, nor a spoon in which the universe is seen grotesquely mirrored. Passion, Emotion, Habit, let us call it by the convenient name of *Feeling*, is not outside the mind, still less interposed between the mind and a universe waiting ready to be looked at. Neither is the mind looking at anything. "The mind," in whatsoever way science may eventually define and explain it, is our name for a number of processes re-acting and interacting on each other. And "Feeling" is a group of these processes; what is more, happens to be the group which, besides the other group called *memory*, decides not only *how* but *what* we shall see. As is well known, memory, that is to say stored-up experience, allows us, by its laws of association, to add of new impressions only such as are related to our previous ones. Memory may in fact be described as our inner Past selecting among a potential outer Present. And similarly Feeling may be said to be our inner individual Present which selects among all the multitudinous whirl of potential impressions with which, as William James put it, the universe ceaselessly bombards our senses, deciding like memory, but with more violence of choice, which of them shall be worked into the living and changing pattern of our thought.

It is a matter of common knowledge how little we see of what does not interest us, and how what we desire or dread makes us recognize its signals and its vestiges on every side. In the same way, we all know that feeling is ever evading and excluding whatever may run counter to it; that passion is perpetually collecting fuel to keep up its flame.

This again is metaphor ; and, in so far, may be misleading. Let us therefore seek in our recollection of others and of ourselves for the unmetaphorical facts. Here is Titania, whose love needs no magic philter, doting on the soft silkiness of the dear ass's head, but never noticing the queer shape of those delicious ears. And here is Don Quixote, his eye catching a mile off the golden glint of the magic helmet ; but, close at hand, not recognizing its wearer for his crony the village barber. These are the typical delusions of passion, lynx-eyed for the qualities which it wants ; and as blind as a mole to those which it doesn't.

All this is familiar, classical, stale. But there are delusions of a sort less often described, indeed scarcely acknowledged to exist. I mean delusions in which outside persons and things really play only a secondary part, and our own self the dominating first. What we want is not so much this or that object of desire for its own sake ; we want our desire to continue, or our aversion, which is mere inverse desire. What we apostrophize with Faust's "Stay, thou art fair," is not always the beloved, it is often our own condition of being in love ; the feeling which we cannot afford to part with.

Moreover there is a kind of feeling which we always require to keep, even when we have parted with all other ones. The vital feeling of a tolerable self. Bottom with his ass's head must remain a fairy prince lest Titania cease, in her own eyes, to be a fairy queen. The Barber's Basin must remain the Helmet of Mambrino lest poor Don Quixote lose belief in his own (long lapsed) sanity. Thus what might have been the merest passing mistake, easily corrected and forgotten, when its acknowledgment would disrupt the comfortable unity and stability of our feelings, especially of our feeling for self, takes on the status and permanence, the invisible dignity, of a Delusion.

I have mentioned that group of feelings, that imperious habitual passion, which psychologists, for lack of a better word, call *the feeling of self*. For queer as are our delusions about our lovers or enemies, the most common and the most abiding delusions of all are about something which we cherish (and rightly !) more than any lover, detest (also

rightly) more than any enemy : our good opinion or our bad opinion of our self. Since our self (and here comes in a necessary delusion, due not to *one* feeling only but to *all* our feelings), our Self is to each man and woman the inevitable, because the only directly felt, centre of his or her Universe.

## IV

### *DIRECTION OF THE INTENTION*

The world inside us, the world which suffers or rejoices, is, after all, the one which counts for most ; the outside world taking on importance only in proportion as it affects that world within. Hence there is nothing concerning which we are more commonly hood-winked by our feelings than about our feelings themselves. Neither is there any loss or sacrifice causing more massive and also more ramified suffering, more unmistakable leakage of vital energy, than does any disruption of the soul by conflicting desires, standards and habits.

Moreover such suffering and diminution is far more frequent than is remorse or inextinguishable regret for which it is so often mistaken. It is of daily occurrence ; and madness lies that way. Hence Natural Selection, which gave to insects and fishes their protective power of looking exactly like what they are not, has allowed life and progeny only to such human beings as have, similarly, evolved an automatic self-defensive power of believing themselves to be guided by motives often the reverse of those which they really obey.

Suppose, for instance, we became aware of a wish to do something the doing of which runs counter to our other and habitual wish not only to seem, but (what is far more imperative) to *know* ourselves indeed to be, reasonable and decent persons, worthy of esteem. In some cases the desire to be thus reasonable and decent having the strength of habit, while the sudden conflicting desire, say to pay off an old grudge, being comparatively weak, the first indignantly sweeps the second, if not out of existence, at all events out of sight, into that Hades (or rather that cesspool) where, according to the Freudians, suppressed desires lurk like ghosts or microbes. But in other cases the two desires may be so equally matched that the soul

is, as poets say, torn in twain; or at least, made exceedingly uncomfortable and quite incapable of attending to anything else by its oscillation between the two. Thus behind the conflicting desires, viz., to remain reasonable and decent, and yet to do what our standard of reasonableness and decency forbids, our life of the feelings is harassed not merely by the intense discomfort of that conflict, but by efforts to put a stop to it. Hence a compromise, which at this stage of evolution is so automatically perfect as to act at the merest suggestion of the predicament, sparing us all its multifold painfulness in blissful ignorance of what is taking place. We satisfy the craving to do a mischief to that particular person, but without doing it at the expense of our reasonable and decent reprobation for all forms of vindictiveness. We damage that person, say by disclosing some scandalous circumstance. But we make the disclosure because we become aware that our duty as a citizen demands it; for the rest, we cannot help the coincidence that the individual whom we are thus compelled to hand over to reprobation, happens to be the same towards whom we once bore, or might have borne (for we no longer bear it!), a personal grudge. I can hear my honourable (and duly honoured) reader's indignation at this point: "But what you are describing is what *I* call hypocrisy." Well, my dear indignant one, you would be wrong to call it so. Hypocrisy is a horrid, low vice, and the whole of mankind does not spend most of its time in being low and horrid and vicious; besides if you and every one of us are hypocrites, by what name shall we designate the Tartuffes and Pecksniffs? No, this would indeed, as you may say, be hypocrisy if, as you seem to think, the processes were conscious to those in whom they take place, as they are obvious to you or me looking on and analysing. That is just what they are not, any more than the muscular adjustments of getting on or off a bicycle are conscious to the rider. Indeed just as that cyclist would probably fall off if he realized precisely what his arms and legs were doing, so, if their far more perfect spiritual automatism were suddenly revealed in consciousness, this process would be brought to a sudden stop by astonishment and shame. Otherwise it really would be a case for speaking of

hypocrisy. What I am describing is not *deception* but *self-deception*, not falsehood but delusion. It is so far removed from lying that it often makes telling or acting a lie unnecessary. So much so that I suppose one reason why we have grown so liable to this particular form of delusion, is that it ministers to a very vital and commendable requirement of human nature: the need for a good conscience and for moral principles. Moreover, the very essence of all delusion is that we do not know we are deluded.

So, when those Jesuit moralists, so roughly handled by Pascal, unwarily registered, in their *manuals of confession*, their famous recipe for reconciling, let us say, a penitent's persistent hankering after his neighbour's wife with that same penitent's sincere abhorrence of mortal sin, by simply *directing his intention* away from guilty intrigues to the mere avoidance, imperative on a man in good society (*honnête homme* as the seventeenth century called him) of the silly predicament and ridiculous reputation of the patriarch Joseph—when those Jesuit casuists did this, they were following the example of a casuist subtler and more experienced, also more devoted to moral order, than even themselves. That long established, indeed unconscious and automatic casuist who saves so large a share of individual man's and of collective mankind's standards and commandments, is no other than the particular embodiment of Delusion that *directs our intentions* with the little formula: “*not for the sake of satisfying my passion but solely to make sure of X.Y.Z.*”

But Delusions—for that minion of the Great Waster (and at the same time that trusty guardian of so much morality) is in reality a noun of multitude—delusions require each other's assistance, each making work for its sisters. So the belief that we are doing it (whatever *it* may happen to be) merely to make sure of X.Y.Z., requires the belief that X.Y.Z. ought to be brought about, and can be brought about only by our doing that particular thing. Thus, if we burn a heretic, or a library, not for any pleasure of our own in such burnings, oh no! but solely for the greater glory of Christ or Allah, it becomes necessary that we should be absolutely sure that the burning in question is an infallible means of magnifying Christ or Allah;

let alone be absolutely sure that Christ or Allah really exists, and that we are in possession of all necessary information concerning him.

## V

*"LARNING THEM"*

I shall not deal any more in those, as we English express it, unpleasant (meaning over attractive) instances supplied by Pascal's wicked Jesuits. For obvious purposes of national propaganda the present war has indeed removed the offensive associations (*malodorous* is the term in Hansard) which used to cling to the word *immorality*, extending its use to other relations than those of persons who ought to have been married but are not. The present war and its propaganda affords quite unexceptional examples of the mischief which can come of such mutually dependent groups of delusions.

At the moment (October, 1918) of my writing the above little analysis, Satan's *Ballet of the Nations* is being prolonged, perhaps indeed only by a few weeks and only a few thousand additional casualties, because a number of righteous and world-wise people are saying "not from revenge, *but merely . . .*" the *but* representing the necessity, as a peace-loving friend of mine excellently put it, "that every German Child must learn that war does not pay and that Germany has got the worst of it, was worsted and beaten; *not from revenge*, but to 'larn' them for the future, as they say in the north country. For it takes so much to convince them."

"*Not from revenge*"; my friend has double underlined that *not*. But my friend has been at less trouble to explain, let alone to demonstrate, the arguments and examples behind her certainty that the "*larning them*" will be conducive to the lasting peace, upon which that friend's kind heart is set. The certainty is put not as the conclusion of an inquiry, but as the premise for a proposition; indeed as the indisputable basis for the only safe line of conduct; it seems to be an axiom something like two and two make four. Now far be it from me to deny that this axiomatic premise may be true. I have indeed not been shown *why* it is to be considered axiomatic,

but that is not sufficient to exclude the possibility that, supposing my friend to have her way, and the German Child to be larned "by very severe peace terms as regards territory" (and at the preliminary expense of some weeks or at least days of additional death and mutilation) the "larning" will be found to have resulted in the German Child's (grown to man's estate) recognizing that "War does not pay." Children are undoubtedly queer, and heaven knows Germans are queerer still; so no one should close the chapter of queer possibilities. But, though possible, it is not (as those additional casualties might require before being embarked upon) proven, neither by naming the proverbial six instances, nor by analysing the statement to its psychological and sociological elements, and deducing the result from our generalized knowledge of these elements. On the other hand, there exists, so far, a psychological possibility (mind I don't say *certainty* nor even *probability*) that a sufficiently beaten, a thoroughly well "larned" nation, may take the opposite view, viz., that since war has paid their victors, who have got rid of a dangerous competitor, let alone acquired a few incidental trifles, so also war might, indeed *would* have paid *them*, if only the luck, the odds, perhaps the preliminary precautions, had been a little different. There is as much probability of that as of the inveterate gambler, after laying down his last sovereign, getting up with the conviction that if only the other fellow hadn't held that ace, or if only he himself had carried out that Monte Carlo "system," gambling would have paid, so much so that he decides to take the first opportunity of trying his luck and his skill again. That the intended "larning" may have an analogous result on the German Child's mind is therefore in no way negatived by what we know of the general habits of human beings.

My friend does not controvert that possible deduction; indeed she is so far from denying, that she does not ever mention it; as with other axioms, the reverse of hers is treated as unthinkable. So much for the deductive probabilities. Now let us look for the inductive proof, the six proverbial examples that nations sufficiently well "larned" become quite resigned to the "larning." And here let me confess

that, being but imperfectly acquainted with history (by no means on good terms it would seem with Clio), I do not know what six instances might be adduced to that effect, and my friend has not told me. On the other hand I happen to remember that when in 1871 the Germans determined to humiliate and "bleed white" and mutilate France, they alleged the necessity of "*larning*" her not to be the vain-glorious aggressive nuisance she had been ever since the Thirty Years' War; not to go on talking of that left bank of the Rhine, not to sing Alfred de Musset's couplets about German girls remembering the French occupation, of "*trace altière du pied de nos chevaux marquée dans votre sang.*" It was only last winter I re-read the furious letter with which Carlyle insisted on the necessity of thus *larning* France, in answer to Leonard Courtney's prophetic plea that such treatment would only result in further wars. In which controversy a half century more, and the present war, have surely proved that the late Carlyle was wrong, and the future Lord Courtney (let me affectionately repeat that honoured name) right in the matter of the particular *larning* under consideration.

For all of which reasons, or more properly speaking, for the absence of any sufficient reasons behind that friend's (and so many other friends') axiom that "severe terms about territory" will make the German Child remember that War Does Not Pay, I am inclined to think that the double-underlining of that "*NOT from revenge BUT,*" is likely to have been a delusion of the very kind I have been trying to describe and explain : an unconscious and automatic compromise by which we are able to satisfy our passionate cravings while maintaining our allegiance to principles and standards ; able to avoid both remorse for having indulged and regret at having refrained.\*

\* The above was written before the Armistice. Since then there has been added a Tableau to Satan's Ballet exceeding in strangeness of horror the comparatively conventional war-dance which preceded it. The grave of that proverbial German Child is becoming a premature one, and the number which will profit by the "*larning*" being undoubtedly diminished (*Easter, 1919*). Let me add (*June, 1919*) that we in England seem to be mistaking for a general *mea culpa* on the

Now, in the present case, the desire to make the German child carry scarlet scars of retributive humiliation down to its, perhaps elderly, grave, is very natural in those who share every belligerent country's (including Germany's) simple faith that the war was the Doing of the Enemy. And, just because this natural but dangerous craving for revenge is one which Christian and humanitarian people do not like to own up to, it might be possible, if they did so, to shame them out of what they would consider a lapse into barbarism, after which they might even begin to suspect that the future peace of the world was endangered by yielding to so unchristian and uncivilized a passion. But when people are persuaded that, if anything, they are sacrificing their own merciful instincts to the stern axiomatic necessity of "larning" the Enemy Child into recognizing that War Does Not Pay, why then . . .

Why then, Satan's pet minion Delusion has answered to the whistle of the Waster of Human Virtue.

## VI

### THE OUTER SELF

It is conceivable that some of my readers will somehow or other skip that last little chapter with its example of a War Delusion. They will stick, or stickle, at a more abstract portion of this note, and lay hold, as of a missile against me, of my remarks that these secret *mobiles*, unavowed impulses and emotional habits, all converge in the one great vital delusion which we all carry in ourselves: that each is the centre of the universe, and that whatever each believes must be the truth.

"What!" cry those readers, "just when thousands of men have given limbs and life, and thousands of women have given those same men, for their country and their ideals, you come

part of the German people what is merely the natural tendency to discredit, by heaping up responsibilities, the discarded government which had led them to ruin. The Germans might similarly have mistaken the French diatribes against *L'Homme de Sedan* for a confession that France had deserved her defeat at their hands.

and say that every human being is for himself or herself the inevitable centre of the universe ! Choose a likelier moment for such attempts to belittle human nature."

My meaning does not belittle poor human nature, rather magnifies, glorifies it, by the recognition of the vast concentric circle of persons, things, places and ideas which radiate in every mind from that living, burning core of individual feeling. Beyond that warm and vivid sphere of whatsoever is thus sucked into our desire and will, there extends indeed the lucid, chilly universe which is merely seen and understood ; and which, in proportion as it recedes from that radiant furnace of each individual's self, vanishes into the darkness and void of our indifference. If some of us penetrate with our understanding or imagination into those outer spaces, it is because we care, we love, to do so : and the furthest constellations, the remotest past, the most abstract problems happen to be the object of our desire, and, so to speak, the strange prolongation of our own warm selves.

For it is that feeling self, individual and oftenest incom-  
municable, which does the hoping, fearing, loving and hating, altering the outer reality by the act of our desire. It is, in truth, that feeling self which does the only living whereof we are ever directly aware; attributing that innermost experience of our own to other creatures whom we therefore call living, nay to the forces which we lend to the material world, as when we speak of attraction and cohesion, evolution, and even of cause and effect.

Thus our individual self of feeling becomes our centre of all things, from which we measure all distance and direction ; the point whence start and whither converge all our perspectives of space and time. From it, and it alone, guided but not impelled by reason, go forth our strivings and actions ; and in this wider self, emanating from our small feeling ego, resides whatever creature or cause or standard we love or hate sufficiently for us to sacrifice to it other portions of our wishes and habits ; all the things for which men have laid down their life and women given up their men. And whatsoever we thus prefer, as we ignorantly say, *to self*, is but the most potent portion of this our multifold greater ego ; and is pre-

fferred because it has become consubstantial with our own life and feeling.

It is in this sense that each individual of us, however paltry, is the centre of the whole universe for which he sacrifices himself and others. And in the widening of this circle, whereof his feeling self is for each the centre, lies all that mankind has achieved, all the virtue and wisdom of which mankind is capable.

## VII

### *LOVE*

I have shrunk from naming Love among the Players in Satan's Orchestra, although I have given a hint, speaking of the comrade seeking to avenge his comrade and the mother sending forth her last son that the other ones may not have died for naught, that this greatest and most protean of all passions has, as the current saying goes, *done its bit* to keep up the war. That much, however we may wish to blink it, is evident ; indeed, not being to be blinked, is put as a merit to Love's account.

There remains a subtler manner in which Love, so oddly transforming back and forwards into Revenge, has served the purposes of Satan. And that is as a begetter of Delusion. I have pointed out the unavowed, constant, irresistible action on our ideas and judgments of those vague groups of feelings, ever on the alert, ever exposed to hurt, which concern the individual self. It is the nature of all Love—love of persons, country, stocks and stones, aims and creeds—to enclose its objects into the outer, but equally sensitive, self which every living soul spins round its private core ; connecting them with our innermost feeling by spiritual nerves so sensitive that a rough touch on them, merely an irreverent gesture aimed against their bare thought or name, sends the blood to our cheeks or brings a knot into our throat. This being the case, the objects of our love, nay rather the idea of those objects, call forth the defensive automatism of Delusion. More intolerable than our own sense of diminution, is the feeling that what we love is weighed and found wanting. We can, some of us, at

rare intervals, admit our own nothingness, recognize the meanness of our spirit, the hopeless self-contradiction, even hypocrisy, of our thoughts and lives. To recognize any such blemishes and alloys in those we love is far more difficult, if only because our deepest pride refuses to admit that what we adore is rubbish. Hence much tampering with our standards, habits, instincts; casuistry often silently formulated to ourselves in order to save the object of our love from such desecrating doubt, from such discrimination between nobler and baser elements as breaks what love insists on most: the unity of the loved object.

In time of war, particularly, a man may readily admit that, personally, he is not noble nor even honest; but he will fly out at your smallest suggestion that his country, that the aggregate of individuals whom he usually ignores and mainly despises, headed by individuals, Lloyd George or Carson, whom he may positively hate, can possibly be at fault. His country is in him; he is part of it; and that emotional participation makes him far more sensitive in its honour than in his own. Hence *my country right or wrong* always turns into *my country which never is or can be other than right*; since who has ever consciously defended a bad cause or admittedly clung to a worthless thing? And this produces manifold war delusions, both of commission of falsehood and omission of truth. Hence also inability to recognize the intricate reciprocity of all causes of war and all conduct of war; amazing blindness to the symmetrical irony of war's realities; the grim farce of girding against autocracy in Germany when we had allied ourselves with, indeed were indirectly drawn into war by the deeds of, the incomparably worse autocracy of Russia. Similarly the talk of exacting justice to small nationalities from our enemies when we never stirred a finger to save Jews or Finns from our Allies; indeed when, despite the supplications of liberal Russia, we had lent our money to help the Tzar to flout his Dumas. All such keenness to the mote in the neighbour's eye and blindness to the beam in our own is part of the unceasing play of those self-regarding feelings I have tried to deal with. Love, love of country, class, ideas, aims, love of son, brother, husband, brings the doings and characters of others within that warm

outer sphere of our feelings. It makes them partake of our innermost self, links them up with our centres of magnification and diminution, and obliges us to be as deluded about others as we naturally are about ourselves.

Indeed it has often seemed to me that if, in this country at least, so many of those who most distrusted and despised the notion of settling anything by violence, have yet come to endure, acquiesce, and at last exult in, war ; if especially so many of our women, to whom slaughter of other women's children is almost physiologically odious, have come to look without a shudder, rather with pride in their eyes, at the armless, legless creatures sent back from France ; and have learned to read with complacency accounts of such doings as should have turned a butcher sick, this has been due originally to the love which each of those women has borne to a husband, nay even more to a son or a brother ; due to the delusion that what *he* did could not be otherwise than innocent, nay holy ; the delusion wherewith their love has protected itself against desecration.

Thus love, the love of self-effacing noble mothers, of tender and reserved sisters, that wonderful passion where sex is sublimated into sexlessness, has, like indignation and pity, kept Satan's ballet going with its steady, subdued voice, so exquisitely in tune, of such unearthly purity of timbre. Oh, more than by nursing the wounded, manufacturing surgical appliances and turning out and filling shells which scatter entrails and whole villages, have the women of all belligerent countries participated by their love, their love delusion, in the slaughter and ruin and hatred of these war-years !

*October, 1918.*

## VIII

We are all of us (and that is part of Delusion's evil work) so apt to misinterpret the words of our intellectual opponents, that I am a little afraid of being supposed to treat with contempt or censoriousness the hidden life of the feelings. Let me therefore say that I hold it to be the most venerable among all the mysteries of human nature, and that without

it we should neither perceive nor act. Moreover, these innermost feelings are essentially ourself. My only quarrel with them is when, begetting Delusion, they prevent our seeing, recognizing, respecting, other things and other selves, and thereby frustrate the co-operation required with and from the great multifold otherness which is what I mean by Reality.

## IX

One reason why they do so, why our inner life of feeling does so easily interfere with our knowledge of reality, is that reality is intricate, while our feelings are comparatively simple. Reality has many sides, faces and facettes, many dimensions of time as well as space, many competing as well as collaborating appeals ; whereas our feelings, taken at any single moment, are unified in a single imperative. Hence they can come in contact with, grasp and hold, only the smallest number of the aspects which reality offers, and naturally only those for which they have a use. This inevitable omission, and the consequent concentration of certain selected qualities and aspects, accounts sufficiently for much delusion ; delusion for which Reality imposes a penalty, since what our feelings have omitted does not exist any the less, acts none the less, and will, sooner or later, force itself, sometimes cruelly, on our unwariness.

Moreover—and this point is not sufficiently insisted upon by our philosophers—Reality is not merely *actual* ; it is *potential*. *Esse est percipi posse*. When we speak of a thing having *real existence*, we do not mean merely that at this present fraction of time it is acting, or acted on, in a given manner ; we mean that it *has* acted or *been* acted upon, come into existence, undergone certain changes in the past, without which it would not be there such as it is by definition ; and, more important still, we mean that, present circumstances being altered in a specified manner, there will be manifested certain *other* qualities or actions implied in our idea of that thing, and without which it would be not that one but another : the rose is not developing from its original seed or cutting, putting out leaves, opening out petals, under our eyes ; but it *must have*

*done all these things* unless it was no real rose, but a painted or paper one ; similarly we are not necessarily at present either inhaling its fragrance or being pricked by its thorns, but the possibility of both these happenings, *ceteris paribus*, are included in its *being a rose*. Reality is composed of what one might call an incorporated past and an unfoldable future ; and, since the present is but a point, that past and that future constitute far the larger proportion of all real things and persons ; and in order to know these, we must correctly recognize at least a part of their past and correctly foretell at least a part of their future.

Now this is what feeling, by which I mean all the unclassified emotional tendencies no less than the well-defined emotions and passions—this is what feeling often prevents. Feeling is present, often very fleetingly present ; but while present, predominant ; and it is concerned only with present aspects. The past and future ones, the aspects which we have to remember, or to foretell, it either neglects, or else recalls and foretells as a mere homogeneous prolongation, backwards or forwards, of that present : to the eyes of love, the unamiable past qualities, the disquieting future ones, of the beloved object, do not exist ; no decent person can think of a friend or lover as an embryo or a corpse ; and yet those two are aspects inevitably implied in the very existence of every man or woman. Similarly hatred is unable to realize that the nation we are at present endeavouring to crush is the friend and ally of the past, and must become the economic partner, buyer or seller, the scientific and philosophical collaborator, perhaps once more the dear artistic benefactor in the future. All this means that our feelings are whittling away our notion of Reality ; it means delusion by a simple omission.

But the mind abhors a vacuum ; and where feeling omits, it also replaces ; and naturally replaces with what is congruous, hence seems natural, to itself : the beloved has always been radiantly lovable and ever will be ; the enemy has always been (even if secretly) odious, or else being odious now will remain odious until, well ! . . . until he shall have been purged and transformed in the fire of our wrath. Hence, in private concerns the avidity, often humiliating to ourselves

though irresistible, with which we listen to, even ferret out, the unsuspected past shadinesses or follies of those who were once our friends. Hence in this war, the instantaneous belief, on the part equally of both contending parties, in plots against the peace of the world, long existing military preparation to pounce upon unsuspecting neighbours, or, as the Germans believed about the Entente, to strangle and starve by diplomatic and commercial encirclements. Some of which suspicions may, by coincidence, become historically correct,\* but they are believed not because of the real evidence or real logical probability ; they are believed because our feelings insist on such belief. The facts may be real, the belief is delusion.

Nor is this all. When it happens that in the incalculable intricacy of the past, our feelings allow us to perceive, or put us on the scent of certain real qualities or events, these are but torn-off shreds of the vast real web, threads loosened from the others ; or rather—for life cannot be dealt with in metaphors of inorganic things—they are minute living fibres which have taken their very existence from other delusions, which themselves escape our notice, either because we are too intent upon the virtuous or poisonous quality we are looking for, or because the recognition of those real origins would make us pause, would bring up short our hatred or our self-righteousness. For in our search for further proof of guilt, we may, we should, in proportion to the honesty of our search, light upon responsibilities, common crimes and follies, of our own ; at least upon the disconcerting fact, turning us to stone unless looked at (like the Gorgon's head) in our own private glass : the fact of common beginnings and common human nature.

And so, lest our feelings be checked, our acts arrested, frozen in mid-course by that intolerable aspect, we safeguard our passion which is our present life, by looking at Reality only in the mirror of Delusion.

## X

There is another reason also why feeling is perpetually at loggerheads with Reality. It ignores the fact that Reality

\* The vindictiveness of the armistice-blockade and of the Peace conditions constitutes such a coincidence.

implies change ; and it does so because one of its own essential accompaniments is the delusory sense of its own eternal and unchangeable nature. Passionate feeling is conscious of nothing but itself and its object, that is to say of its own present ; and it blots out all realization of other and less vehement states. Moreover, by the law of psychic co-ordination and unification, which Karl Groos has aptly called the monarchical constitution of the mind, the feeling which is dominant refuses to recognize anything which does not submit and minister to its aggrandisement. He is but a half-hearted lover who can believe that his love can ever be less ; and the angry man who knows that his anger will not last beyond sunset is not a formidable enemy. Similarly when Faust called upon the Consummate Moment, bidding it stay, he evidently did not remember that his own desire might move on.

Indeed one is tempted to think that it is from its brief bouts of passion that mankind has evolved its belief in eternity and unchangeableness. Volume and intensity of feeling, although in truth the heralds of change and re-action (since they wear out the very powers they elicit), become, to those who experience them, the warrant of permanence. Can any man *think* green while the stared-at patch of scarlet burns his nerves ? Yet it is that very burning which, a minute later, obliges his eye to see upon the white wall not a red after-image, but a green one.

Similarly do passion's optics blind us to Reality's essential characteristic : Reality's continual, inevitable change.

And in the matter especially of this *Ballet of the Nations*, the angry combatants cannot believe that their anger will ever lessen or seek another object—as has happened with those French allies of ours, who, twenty years ago, in Fashoda days, were enemies with whom we nearly were at war.

The knowledge of the unceasing flow of change in all things, molecules and atoms dancing vertiginously in and out of their places in space ; and coupled with it the knowledge of the inevitable illusion whereby our passion feels itself and its objects undying and unchangeable—it is this knowledge of the reality of change and unreality of stability which makes one

shrug one's shoulder at all talk of guaranteeing future security by crushing, wiping out an enemy ; for even while that talk is going on, the whirling complexities of things may be transforming that enemy into the ally, or rather into the friend (for let us have no more allies, for God's sake !), of the future.

Make the future secure ! padlock and double-lock it ; glue and nail it to its place, the place we think it safe in ! Meanwhile we ourselves and our wishes and interests are being swept along, leaving nothing behind save our burnt-out desires and animosities ; and facing perpetually new contingencies and unguessed dangers.

June, 1917.

## XI

I have tried to show how our feelings stealthily influence our views for the sake of self-consistence, self-respect, and, more precious still, devotion to whatever we love best. There are more obvious and grosser cases where feeling prompts action and where that action itself requires a fresh output of feeling for its continuance or its efficiency.

The recent advertisement of a picture-palace openly proclaims this psychological truth : " You can't put up a good fight," it warns the passing patriot, " unless your blood boils ; " and to this end bids him come to see " The Kaiser, the Beast of Berlin," at the Scala Theatre.

It is indeed difficult to fight one's battle while admitting that oneself, to whatever small an extent, may have been to blame for the occurrence. It is even more difficult to induce others to fight by saying : " We have got into such a mess that, willy-nilly, we must fight tooth and nail or get the worst of it." Still more impossible to admit that the adversary also is in a mess, and that it is our fighting him which obliges him to fight us and *vice versa*. Fighting implies fighting for one's own just cause. Certain states of the nerves, nay of the muscles, are incompatible with certain thoughts ; a clenched fist, for instance, with the notion that there is something to be said for the other side.

## CONFUSION

## I

As he himself has pointed out, Satan's choicest ministers, Delusion and Confusion, most often hunt in couples ; whence a difficulty in dealing with each separately. That Delusion is the master (or rather mistress) of the two, Confusion invariably obeying and almost always requiring to take a lead from her, is a hopeful sign that the Primæval Chaos and Old Night are, after all, shrinking and receding from the human soul. It means that mankind has already stocked up a common store of wisdom, such that, whenever their interests are immediately concerned, even the dullest people can be trusted to show a minimum thereof, always provided they are not forbidden its use by preference and aversion, in the acute form of passion or the chronic one of prejudice. Where either or both of these deluding forces come into play, as when the subject is Religion, or War, what happens is that people purposely forget to pay their tribute to common-sense, just as, according to Dr. Freud, subconscious avarice make his patients occasionally forget to pay their fees. At any rate, what people really want, on similar occasions, is to go on talking, feeling and acting in the way that they're inclined to, without making too sure what it is all about. And thus Delusion calls in Confusion.

## II

Having thus explained why and in what manner Delusion and Confusion hunt in couples, I hasten to add that Confusion does not really *hunt* at all, takes no exercise worth speaking of, is, in fact, torpid like the Primæval Chaos and Old Night whose sway in our minds is handed down to her. There is an attractive, splendid, majestic side to Delusion, reconciling one, for all its mischievous folly, to the recognition that, in one form or other, in the case for instance of mothers, lovers, and many kinds of genius, Delusion will never cease attendance on the human race. But there is nothing the least attractive about

Confusion, except to professional mythologists. And even the complicated and often sanguinary muddles of ritual and myth are due to hasty logic, quite as much as to the dull takings-for-granted to which that logic is applied. Be this as it may, Confusion, being nine-tenths of it dullness, is a dull subject, and I wish I could pass it by with the disdainful "*non ragioniam di lor*" of Virgil about those sinners who sinned from never having been quite alive. But when dull things are also mischievous, one must not yield to that temptation. And having mentioned those denizens of Hell "*che non fur mai vivi*," I can begin by saying that theirs is precisely the essential sin of Confusion, and what differentiates it principally from Delusion, which, arising in feeling and resulting in action, may be said to be too alive by far, though alive with the transient narrowed life of the Ego, or rather of the Ego's *Here and Now*. Left to itself (though that rarely happens), Confusion is inert. Incuriously and torpidly it acquiesces in all the heapings-up of casual experience, dully expects that to-morrow must be like to-day; takes a single case as sufficient to make a rule; identifies the *post hoc* with the *propter*; and having partaken of beans and bacon on the same plate, imagines no other possible classification of those products of the vegetable and animal worlds. It does not understand, because it does not divide the thing to be understood into its constituent elements; still less, of course, does it ever weigh, shuffle and recombine such elements in its imagination, for it has no more imagination than it has analysis. It learns to look alive only by hitting itself in divers unexpected directions; and ten to one goes on attributing the responsibility for such bruises to the chairs and tables; or making an effort, it thinks (as primitive religions taught) that the chairs and tables must have had some spite against it.\*

\* Gilbert Murray, *Four Stages of Greek Religion*, page 25, gives a good example of this primaevial, primordial kind of Confusion, showing its lazy or at least helpless character: "The process of making winds and rivers into anthropomorphic Gods is, for the most part, *not the result of using the imagination with special vigour*. It is the result of *not doing so*. The wind is obviously alive . . . it blows; how? Why naturally just as you and I blow. . . . And unless we are going to make a great effort of the imagination to try to realize, like a

Now æons and æons of bangs and bruises have shaken up human dullness to the extent of formulating certain simple rules, what Descartes summed up as "methods of carrying one's mind," whereby to thread one's way in the Great Otherness. Those are in practical matters the precepts of common-sense, and, when employed, where bruises and bangs seem less proximate, the laws of Logic. But when bruising and banging does not immediately threaten, Confusion usually avers that, for its part, *it believes only in facts and experience*, and utterly declines inquiring into the validity of that supposed experience or the significance of those quoted facts.

### III

While dealing with Delusion, I have already suggested that there are other fundamental human desires besides those made evident by their action on outer things, as do those appertaining to hunger, sex and so on. Moreover there are human instincts, and fundamental ones, which are such, although we cannot trace them back (as MacDougall traces what he calls *instincts*) to lower animals. There are needs and repulsions, there are real *appetites*, which we discover in scrutinizing the inner and invisible, the spiritual man ; appetites which, not knowing what the consciousness of animals may be, we cannot assert of all, indeed of any, of them ; which on the other hand, knowing our own consciousness, we have to recognize as among the mobiles of *our* actions, and more especially of our opinions and what we call our judgments, though of judging there is often little enough about them. What I am speaking of, and require to speak of just in proportion as other writers have not mentioned them, are largely instincts for the avoidance of mental and moral effort, and directed to the comfort of our mental and moral being. They may indeed be traceable (I think they certainly are) phylogenetically to the instincts

*scientific man, just what really happens, we naturally assume that it does these things in the normal way, in the only way we know."*

The italics are mine. I learn from p. 16 that this kind of Confusion, which strikes me as answering to "Chaos and Old Night" has received from Dr. Preuss the delightful appellation of *Ur-Dummheit*, which Prof. Murray translates rather lamely "primal Stupidity."

and habits regulating bodily effort and attitudes ; but before tracing them back to supposed rudiments in lower forms of life, we had far better make sure of their existence in our own experience. And for this reason I commend to the psychologically-minded among my readers, my note upon Satan's servant, Delusion, and particularly this present one upon her sister, Confusion.

I have remarked that Confusion is due to mental inertness : either the seeming inertness of primæval men tired by the horrible amount of puzzling mysteries and dangerous problems besetting them ; or the more real inertness in our languid selves. In ourselves, let me say at once, in *myself*, I can discover a marked aversion to changing the mental attitude, to suspending judgment, to every activity involved in discrimination. We hate having to discriminate because it involves keeping up many balls (like Hazlitt's Indian Jugglers), or holding many threads separate ; because it involves walking round a question, turning it over and seeing the other sides of its four-square existence. Indeed the realization of *four-squareness*, of *other sides*, is pleasant only to persons of unusual spiritual exuberance ; which explains, I think, why experts in painting have taken the representation (or not) of cubic existence, of bulk, as a rule-of-thumb criterion whether (or not) a picture is by a master or a disciple. But another reason making us avoid discrimination, and prefer confusion, is that discrimination checks definite attitude and mood on our part, in that it implies the possibility of an attitude or a mood which we can't yet foresee. Now, uncertainty about our attitudes and moods is tiring, and we often prefer remaining in a muddle to risking that uncertainty. Even the most dispassionate, the most contemplative and unpractical among us like to be ready, primed, for one or other kind of feeling or action. We hate having to keep in readiness for any or every eventuality : it is intolerably exhausting. Worse still, however, and consequently more hated by our secret torpidity, is having to *divide oneself* : it makes us feel uncertain, off our centre of gravity, depriving us of our cherished sense of bulk, weight and direction. We detest splitting up people, causes, interests, into desirable and un-

desirable halves, because we hate splitting ourselves into an ego which approves of side A, while disapproving of side B of the same individual, thing or event. Hence our tendency to secure our own unity of feeling and judgment by closing our eyes to one side of every thing or creature. We want to hate and love comfortably and completely ; and if there must needs be two sides to the person or subject, would rather take them on alternate days or years. Much of our "loyalty," our "fidelity" and "faith," are merely such inert preference for thinking that the friend, country, cause, etc., is simple and homogeneous ; preference for being simple and homogeneous ourselves, for continuing thinking and feeling as we had begun. It is often no real compliment to your friend to think him all-wise or all-virtuous ; there is less trouble in taking wisdom or virtue for granted than in admitting that it is sandwiched between something else. Now, as I began by saying, this very natural but unconscious preference for our lazy comfort, is at the bottom of a large amount of confusion. Confusion requires, for its transformation from chaos into proportion and order, a good deal of the particular kind of almost bodily exercise (exercise after all of brain and nerves which *are* body) called thought. And, as that Italian person of quality remarked to Goethe "*Perchè pensa? pensando s'invecchia.*" Why bother to think things out ? It makes one old. So we drop back into that sleepy nest, that unmade, but oh ! so comfortable, bed supplied us by the familiar old arch-slattern, Confusion.

## IV

Hence it comes that Confusion, through sheer inertness, and much as our lethargic charwoman is apt to do with the books and small pictures entrusted to her care, is perpetually standing the rules of logic on their head. I allude to those elementary precepts furnished by primers, and which are apt to vex the student's soul by the suggestion that any human creature could think, e.g., that because Socrates was a wise man, and had a snub nose, all other men who are wise must also have snub noses.

It is, indeed, improbable that anyone ever said or thought anything so imbecile about wise men and noses ; but all of us think in similar fashion about something or other at one time or other, and most particularly in time of war. Arrangements are even made by our rulers for taking advantage of this capacity of illogical thinking. Such an elaborate shrine invoking the salutary presence of Confusion was that particular coloured poster which adorned railway stations, and other haunts of meditative leisure, all through the last summer of the war. It showed a wounded khaki-clad soldier making signs of agonized thirst to a young woman in the uniform of a German hospital nurse, and who, instead of reaching him the glass of water for which he was imploring, empties it out upon the floor before his fevered eyes, not without appropriate diabolic laughter. To guard against any misapprehension there was added an inscription, stating that this was the real deed of a real German nurse, and that *no* Englishwoman would be capable of such an atrocity. The deduction was not formulated, neither were the steps of the syllogism gone through ; but the picture was commissioned, paid for, executed and posted up throughout the Kingdom. Confusion, nudged by patriotic Delusion, was left to do the rest. More psychologically stated, a number of choicely-selected suggestions of a very special kind were thrown into the beholder's mind, to set up certain mental workings which, until familiarity gradually lamed them, would have as accompaniment disturbances of that beholder's circulation, temperature, breathing, and muscular tension, such as are revealed and registered by the automatic apparatus used in laboratories. The result—and since the picture was a part of war-propaganda, the intentional result—being roughly as follows : A nurse in a war hospital empties a glass of water instead of slaking the thirst of a wounded enemy. "No Englishwoman (as the inscription says) would do such a thing." That no Englishwoman would do it, rubs into the beholder's mind that the act was not a practical joke, but a deliberate barbarity. Now the nurse who did it was a German woman. All German nurses are also German women ; therefore, if one German nurse could do this, *all* German nurses could do it. And if all German

nurses could do it, they being *German* women, why all *German women* could do it. With the corollary that since all *German women*, being like that nurse, *German*, can behave in that characteristically *German* way, *that is the kind of behaviour which your son, husband, or brother may expect if he fall into the hands of German women*. And *German women* being distinguished from all other women not only by barbarity, but by belonging to the *German* nation, why then *all Germans* are capable of atrocity, and had better be decently exterminated lest we should all become their victims like the poor man in the picture.

Socrates had a snub nose, and was a virtuous man. All men have not snub noses. Wise men resembling Socrates in the matter of wisdom, must also be distinguished from their less wise fellow-men by having snub noses.

Before consigning this war poster to the oblivion with which the bill-poster's brush has already covered it, let me add a little irregular deduction of my own from the fact that English people and German people, especially in war-time, have a common quality of frequent confusion of thought; moreover that English rulers and German rulers, especially in war-time, may find convenience in exploiting that quality which their peoples share with all other human creatures. And let me therefore sum up: that future investigation will doubtless discover in German railway stations, or in German dustheaps or in German historical museums and archives, war-posters quite analogous to the one I have just dealt with.

Confusion and Delusion, like Patriotism, like Fear and and Hatred, like Heroism and like Satan, have no nationality.

## V

Returning to the difference between those twin ministers of spiritual (and alas! also even more irremediable, material, bodily) waste, I might sum up by saying that Delusion can be overcome only by dispelling passion's spells (forgive the pun!) or rather waiting for time to have dispelled them. Confusion, on the other hand, has to be dealt with by the impertinent and imperturbable application of such questions

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as *Why?* *When?* *Where?* *How often?* *How many?* *On what evidence?* etc. Moreover by putting the rudest and most justified of all queries : *What are we talking about?*

For although the most villainous Confusion can exist in solitary and unspoken thought, as when the barbarity of a single German woman leads to the expectation of barbarity from all German women, nevertheless Confusion gets worse confounded by the use of words.

This is one of the Waster's good jokes, getting evil out of the means to good, since language has been and ought to be the chief assistant of human reason. Words are counters to reckon by, promissory notes ; lovely fantastic cowries, or bits of precious metal stamped with the minute effigy of great Gods ; or mere greasy paper money ; they save lugging and shifting the bulky images of things and actions, a process as inconvenient as paying one's rent in kind, barrels of wine, or recalcitrant pigs. But like paper currency and cheque books, words tempt to such uncontrolled employment as leads to bankruptcy of meaning. Particularly in times of unanimity and emotional stress, when words are passed from hand to hand as "reasons" for our attitude and actions. It happens then that they are given additional currency by the signature, or stamp, of persons whom we know to possess inexhaustible reserves of wisdom in their counting-house. Yet if you insist on their equivalent in definite ideas, it may sometimes turn out that there is only Confusion, eked out of course by passionate delusion, in that exalted till we call their mind.

## VI

Thus, when the war had already lasted three years less a month, we were urged to face another possible three, or more, years of it by a writer towards whom my debt for pleasure and interest is so great that I cannot bring his name into the present connexion. This great novelist whom any reader foolish enough can identify by turning to the *Daily News* for July 4th, 1917, summed up his argument by saying that "*horrible as is Slaughter, Slavery is more horrible still.*"

That cannot be denied ; but neither can it be proved until, knowing alas too well what "Slaughter" means, we also know what is meant by "Slavery." The author in question was so sure of his axiomatic statement that he gave neither definition nor illustration of the second of the two horrible things under comparison. Neither have his subsequent political writings shown whether such things as the Allies have done to Germany during the Armistice, nor those included in our (now signed) peace terms, might be taken as representing that "Slavery" to which we, but fortunately not our Enemies, were so axiomatically bound to prefer unlimited "Slaughter." Let alone the subsidiary question how, were this the case, our great writer imagined that similar treatment could be imposed by a landlocked continental State wedged in by enemies, upon a vast maritime Empire seconded by a vaster maritime ally set between the world's two oceans.

Seeking, however, in that same article of July 4th, 1917, I find one clue to our author's meaning ; or rather, to what, meaning or no meaning, was at the bottom of his mind. For the better to enforce his plea for a steadfast continuation of "Slaughter," he reminded his readers that it had taken "three times three years . . ." to do what ? Guess ! To rid France of the *Ancien Régime* or Europe of Bonaparte ? No. "To win for the people of London the freedom to run their own tramways along their own Embankment."

He left it vague what "Slavery" might mean, that it should weigh more in our decisions than "Slaughter." He also left it uncertain whether "Slaughter" weighed more in his mind than a vestry squabble with its casualties of ink, paper and County Councillors' temper.

Such are the, occasionally disconcerting, results of asking, especially in war-time : "What are we talking about ?"

## VII

But Confusion, particularly when employed in Satan's Ballet, deals (if inertness can be said to deal) with premises as well as deductions. For instance, the old animistic beliefs, added to the old habits of warfare, in which we are all brought

up, allow us to accept certain quite unproved assertions as axiomatic, with much consequent misery in the present and loss to the future.

Does not the majority of us speak, or at least act as if the individual were indestructible, immortal ; and the nation, on the other hand, not only liable to utter extinction but frequently exposed to it ? Now it so happens that the nation or country is far the less destructible of the two ; obviously lasting through many ages ; in fact, one may suspect, endowed with the quasi-immortality of combinations which, being devoid of consciousness, can go on adapting *ad libitum* or almost ; indeed, the immortality of what is an abstraction, an assemblage of changing facts, whose identity is determined by our definition. Now, according as we define what we call the Greek people, we may say that it existed already before the Dorian invasions and continued to exist long after the Roman conquest ; or we may say that it existed only during the few centuries of its historic kings and commonwealths and so long as it was animated by what we choose to call, looking from a distance, the true Hellenic spirit. Similarly, you may say that Venice died when Napoleon suppressed the Republic ; or soon after the League of Cambray ; or, as Ruskin would have said, as soon as it lost its Christian humility and began building according to classic models. Now define either Greece or Venice as you choose, you cannot deny that it has gone on altering its formula of existence through a great many generations. But an individual means a separate organism, and separate consciousness incapable of such indefinite adaptation and transformation ; and a bullet through the heart makes an end to any adaptations and transformations of which we can know for certain, or believe in upon incontrovertible evidence ; whence the repugnance which even the most convinced believers in an after-life normally experience when putting others to death or being put to death themselves. There is between the schoolboy and the slippersed pantaloon a continuity of feeling and knowing which, through all changes, makes the two one in an ineffably intimate manner ; and the cessation of which continuity makes them *none*. So we destroy the poor mortal Tommy to safeguard the abstract,

the immortal, Nation to which he belongs, or more properly (for it is only a name for other Tommies and their belongings) which belongs to him.

It was in similar manner that more religious ages deemed it incumbent on poor, ephemeral, human creatures to enforce the Will of God, and to defend God's honour, let alone justify His ways, while firmly believing God to be omnipotent, omniscient and eternal.

. April, 1918.

### VIII

And since Confusion so often passes muster as pseudo-premises, pseudo-deductions, or pseudo-axioms, like the ones I have just instanced, let me, before leaving the subject, add that I hold by no generalization that war is *always* or *ever* the Greatest of All Evils. To my humble thinking, the Greatest of All Evils is . . . well ! whatever happens to make for most misery, not what fits into our abstract definitions. Nevertheless in our day, and especially in these years just over (if they *are* over !), war is, and has been, an evil if not distancing all possible comparison [since superlatives do not imply that anything has really been compared] at all events an evil whose bulk and ramifications are greater than most of us can quite think out or hold clearly in mind. And among those uncounted ramifications of evil due to war, is the increase of just such mental confusion as in its turn reproduces war itself.

### *POSTSCRIPT TO DELUSION AND CONFUSION*

We are told by Anthropologists that primitive peoples ascribe every death they witness to the violence or malignity of gods or men, they not having yet come by the notion of death as a natural process. Similarly, we might, surely, measure the distance already separating us from intellectual barbarism, by the gradual substitution of the notion of error for the notion of deceit. Not merely because the need for a lie becomes less frequent, even like the inducement to murder;

but rather, because to suspect our neighbour of lying cuts him off from our sympathy, and hence from our comprehension, and sets him opposite us as the particular mythical monster we call *an enemy*. Whereas to believe him in error suggests the possibility of helping him to the truth ; and, what is more important even, ought to suggest, and doubtless will do so more and more, that if he is mistaken in the present instance, *we* may be mistaken in our turn or our degree. Deceit awakens hostility ; and hostility is barren of good. Error, on the contrary, implies common human imperfection, suggests kinship in the need for indulgence, and that is surely a first step, and a long one, in the path of wisdom and virtue.

And before closing these notes about Delusion and Confusion let me implore the reader to believe that although the war has overwhelmed me (and overwhelming means upsetting) with the sense of what Satan owes to those great ministers of his, yet for all acerbity of tone, the foregoing pages are written in humble recognition of the profound naturalness of all this unconscious mischief. It is not a case for scornful pointing the finger at the passionate, the often noble, oftener still pathetic, delusions of others, and their child-like confusion of thought, their standing on its head of fact or of logic. It is a case for suspecting that *we* also are rendering the same unintended services to the Waster of Human Virtue and Human Happiness. And if I have spoken only of such Delusion and Confusion as I have witnessed in the minds of my neighbours, it is, for one reason, because from the very nature of the subject, I cannot speak, I cannot be aware, of the Delusion and Confusion which may be reigning in my own.

*October, 1918.*

## REALITY

*"Mankind's only efficacious helper, the harsh, responsive Reality of things."*—p. 14.

### I

I am aware that some of my readers, those versed in metaphysics or addicted to mysticism, will turn contemptuously from such pedestrian philosophy, deriding my remarks about Reality, and asking: pray how can I set about knowing it at all?

Respected Metaphysicians and less respected Mystics! I am aware that my kind of Reality is not yours; but then it is about my kind that I am talking.

It ought to be clear from all my previous remarks that whenever I speak of Reality I mean Empirical Reality, such Reality as we can and moreover do, more and more, know. There may be another Reality which we do not, and perhaps cannot ever, know. Very likely. But tell me, O ye subtle ones, whence do we get the bare notion of Reality, of something either *known* or *not known*, of a *knowable* and an *unknowable*, except from our occasional experience of *knowing something*? Remove that original empirical reality, efface that belief in having *known something* and your whole notion of Reality, whether *knowable* or *unknowable*, rattles about your ears. In other words it is empirical reality, it is empirical knowing, which has given us the very thought of knowing as such, and which has led eventually, and by a constant process of adding known aspects, to the conception of a reality transcending any one of its aspects; and hence to the metaphysical notion of a reality transcending not only its separate, its known, but its *knowable*, aspects. In fact it is because plain men have experienced what they called *knowing realities*, that philosophers have been able to arrive at the theory that we can *know nothing*. And similarly it is because plain men did not always find what they had known as reality to be in accordance with their likings and aspirations, that mystical

persons decided that the *real*, reality must be different from (more altogether decent and delightful than), well ! the reality which was really distasteful to them. To metaphysicians and to mystics I leave those transcendental Realities, i.e., those Realities which are assumed to be more real just because they appear to be less so.

But, interrupts one of the crossbreed (*Bergsonia hybrida*), between metaphysics and mysticism, you have no right to speak of your empirical reality as a continuum of cause and effect, for not only perception, but thought, *science*, breaks it up. True. Single perceptions, fragmentary thought, at any given moment, and each science taken separately, certainly break up the continuum into aspects dependent upon points of view. But perception as a whole, thought as a continued process, and science in general as distinguished from any single science, build up that selfsame continuum we believe in. For the very fact that we delimit a science, that we select a focus, that we see, hear, and think only one aspect at a time, but never quite the same one twice over, makes us understand that there is a *more*, that there are aspects merging into one another, and furnishes the experience of a connected continuity beyond our delimitations, beyond our momentary focus ; that there are other aspects omitted in our partial definitions. The experience of looking through a telescope or microscope, nay the taken-for-granted fact of our own locomotion and muscular adjustments, tell us that to the right and to the left there is more right and more left ; that in front and behind, there is a further *in front* and *behind*, which can be passed under our eye or under our moving feet, under our shifting attention, without ever a disruption.

What does break up the continuum thus given by our continuous thought, is something very different ; *it is our feeling*, and the attitude and action resulting therefrom. For our feeling lends to its own objects a quality differing entirely from the quality of what are *not* its objects ; a quality of *being important to us* ; of making us hot and cold while itself seeming to participate in our own heat or chill ; a quality of being pursued, clung to, avoided, or combated ; in fact a quality of our own reactions and behaviour, superadded to

the qualities recognized as belonging to the thing itself and distinct from us. And this superadded quality, this emotional and also practical importance, blots out everything which cannot be transformed by it; at the least it entirely alters the intrinsic relations, the relative importance of the thing's other qualities. To feeling, and in proportion to its strength, there tends to exist nothing but what can either excite or relieve it. And to feeling, even in its quietest phases of habitual need and habitual preference or aversion, every other quality, and every other object, is either a mere furtherance or a mere hindrance; when neither of these, it is swept out of the centre of consciousness, indeed often is not allowed into consciousness at all. Thus to feeling and the activities resulting therefrom ("practical life") only their own objects, or rather only the qualities appealing to them in those objects, possess a substantive existence; and in so far as we are dominated by such emotional interests, we all become guilty of what Tolstoy treats as the beginning of all evil: we think of persons and things as subsidiary to our preferences and our intentions; we deny their rights; we blot out their independent existence. Herein consists the real mischief of *selfishness*, that the self, meaning the self's likings and dislikes, hopes and fears, leaves no room for, takes no thought of, any other selves. And thus it blurs, restricts, breaks up, the continuity and what I should be tempted to call, the *multi-dimensional coexistence and continuance* beyond ourselves. Or rather, thus does the animal, the infant, the primitive man, the "practical man," see the world, of men and of things, as groups of perceptions and of memories connected directly with his own feelings and actions, and connected with one another only to the extent that he feels interested in those connexions between them: as, say, the connexion between a certain road and a horse's food and stable; the connexion between a particular tone of voice, and a child's enforced silence; the connexion in the "practical man's" mind of certain geological or geographical items with the possibilities of a remunerative speculation or a commercial dumping-ground. From such a narrow and broken universe, consisting only of lines running to and fro our passions and our interest, man is liberated slowly, intermittently, but more and more, by con-

temptation of things for *their own sakes*. And in this way does the continuity of all things gradually come to mirror itself in our thoughts and observation. Thought and observation for their own sake and for their own joy. Observation and thought which become organized as science and philosophy, and are perpetually multiplying the recognized connexions between things and qualities, and those things' and qualities' continuous transformation. Observation and thought which are unceasingly reaching out, integrating the past and the future, and subordinating the present. Now feeling and practice consider the past and the future only in the light of the present, that is to say with the emotional reference, the emotional quality, of the present. An Englishman of to-day thinks of the events of 1870 through the emotions of this war, just as Carlyle thought of the future of Alsace-Lorraine only through the emotions of his own preference for Germany and aversion to "anarchical" France. And the Englishman of to-day, the German, the Frenchman, of to-day, think of the future of the world in terms of their present fears and hatreds, even as Burke and Nelson thought of France as a country which would always be detested. Such feelings mean that the universal continuum is cut into, distorted, negated. For the continuum, if we grasp its existence, means change in all things; and it means, also, the evanescence which is the price paid by our feelings, desires, aims, and efforts, for their brief spell of present tyranny.

November, 1917.

## II THE CONTINUUM

To the genetic psychologist the laws of logic are but the traces compacted and made regular by the repeated pressure of millions and more generations of Man's fulfilled or disappointed expectations. And just as repeated impressions, from the world outside him, have grouped themselves into what he thinks of as "things;" so also repeated experience of his own reactions to such impressions and such "things" from which they come, have grouped themselves into the necessities and

incompatibilities, the inclusions and exclusions, the superposed systems of what is called rational inference.

The importance of the notion of evolution and all it has brought with it, lies largely in its teaching us to think thus genetically, which means thinking in terms not of stability, but of change. And this has led a small school of thinkers of to-day, whose thought will perhaps be dominant to-morrow, to the recognition that, in order to *understand what a thing is*, we must ask ourselves: what has it been, and what will it become? We must recognize that the concept of a thing implies the postulation of certain potentialities of impression, and that when we affirm its existence in the present, we are in point of fact forecasting its action in the future, even if the action be paradoxically its own disappearance; and are, to however small a degree, describing its production in the past.

With this is closely connected the recognition, brought more and more by experimental psychology, of the part played by *intention* or *context* in what we call a *meaning*. And this implies the constant query: In what sense, with what reference, in what connexion, under what angle, are your thoughts dealing with the "thing" you speak of? Such is the necessary unceasing accompaniment of all knowledge of things, as distinguished from mere emotion about the names by which we call them.

April, 1918.

### III

#### *IDENTITY AND CHANGE*

Our understanding of realities, on which depends our successful dealing with them, itself largely depends upon our power, our analytic and synthetic habit, of thinking in terms of change as well as in terms of identity. For Reality is Change not merely in the sense of the *panta rei*, the eternal flux; but in the not less important sense of identity being largely an expression of a single standpoint, a single angle, focus or power of lens, and consequently omitting from its inventory all that does not come under that angle, focus, lens, of our momentary interest. If we would clutch the Proteus-Reality, it is necessary not only

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to recognize its changes past and future, but also to change our own mode of seeing and moving ; necessary to walk round the mountain, to place the tissue under a microscope, to subject the mineral to different contacts and chemical reagents ; to see the moon no longer either as crescent or full, nor even as a round of green cheese, but as the telescope and spectroscope reveal it.

Now it is characteristic of states of emotion, desire, fear, hope, love, etc., of all states bearing the mark of pleasure or displeasure, that such states cannot imagine change in their object; and that they refuse change (the change requisite to take in other characteristics of that object) in our own attitude towards it. Feeling cuts off the future and past, or else interpolates a bit suitable to our present and calls it by that unseen past or future's name. Feeling also prevents our seeing whatever, even in the present, runs counter to itself. One of the essential features of war-psychology is just this : We cannot see in the adversary any qualities save those which keep up our feeling of enmity and strife ; and we fail also to suspect that the adversary and ourselves and the surrounding universe will not always be what we feel, and therefore believe them to be, at this present moment.

All the present arguments for "crushing Germany" are ostensibly based (though really originating in our *wish to crush!*) on the assumption that peace would bring no new forces into play, the assumption that without such *crushing* no changes would take place to ease and save the situation. By our implicit definition the Enemy, after twenty years of peace (without such crushing) would be exactly what he is (always by our definition) at this particular moment ; and the world's arrangements be so precise a repetition of those existing to-day that the self-same bad situation would return. A trifling concession, not to our knowledge of universal change, but rather to our seemingly unchangeable present passions, consists in saying that, short of the desired crushing, the bad situation would no doubt be worse !

What was the name of that retired Admiral who went about the country sowing acorns in order that England might never lack for oaken timbers, just at the very moment when the first

iron ships were on the stocks ? We are like that old gentleman; only, instead of acorns, we are sowing hatred, injustice, and folly.

*November, 1917.*

#### IV

#### *LIFE AND ART*

I have been told of an eminent contemporary writer who is thanking good luck for allowing him to witness such a struggle between right and wrong; adding that he feels the joy of siding with God against the Devil.

People like that are apt to make one seem, in one's own eyes, a poor sort of creature, a milksop. As a fact the poverty is often rather in them. We nearly all experience that suspending one's judgment requires an effort and is apt to tire. Then there are people who cannot take a middle view because they lack in themselves the complexities requisite for recognizing that white is not always *all white*, nor black always *all black*. These sort of people crave, moreover, for the sense of exaltation (what that particular writer described as *siding with God*), which depends upon a sense of one's own homogeneousness, *wholeness*; or shall we say, one's own *whole-hoggishness*.

Now Reality is not homogeneous in this (to us) satisfactory manner. It by no means always sustains, corroborates, an output of voluminous homogeneous feeling in ourselves, for the simple reason that it is independent of us, and that such volume and homogeneousness as it possesses, does not necessarily happen to tally with that of our feelings, Reality, having been there, so to speak, long before our feelings, and not at all for their sole delectation. Reality, judged by our aims and sentiments and aspirations, by its way of meeting or evading or baulking their claims, is various, heterogeneous, disconnected and quite full of abominable inconsistencies; since *its* consistency is one of mere cause and effect, and *our* consistency is one of emotion and attitude. Neither is this the whole extent of loggerheads at which we find ourselves (or blink finding ourselves) so often with

Reality. It is not merely practical satisfaction for which, as old-fashioned psychology teaches, our feelings and desires, even our appetites, are craving. They hanker also after satisfaction of another, of a qualitative and subjective, kind, namely for *confirmation* and *corroboration*. Since it is of the nature of feeling, except such as is downright unpleasant, (and even this often enjoys its own bitter plenitude !) to *want more of itself*; whence our queer taste for ideas of Unity; and also (though other reasons contribute to this) for Unanimity. It is partly a matter of saving such effort as is involved in all acts of discrimination and holding the balance; the effort involved in that active steadiness which is the opposite of passive vacillation. We hate taking trouble; now such activities involve taking trouble, or else they require our being so vigorous that no trouble need be taken. Above all, we hate being interrupted, contradicted, deflected, once we have taken our emotional bias. On account of that same economy, no doubt, our feelings wish for climaxes. Now Reality, having no beginning and no end anywhere and no point of view or focus—Reality is perpetually offending our taste by anti-climaxes, lack of unity of effect, of symmetry, “composition,” etc. For it is ever flowing and changing; while we, small, ephemeral, are always in the clutch of the *here* and the *now*. And at this point comes in the supreme use of *art*. It satisfies those cravings which are due to *our* nature and *our* nature’s economy of effort. It is art’s business to eliminate the heterogeneous or co-ordinate it in a unifying formula and composition. Art furnishes us with the homogeneous, the adequate, the corroborating, the consistent, the repetitive or stable, the schematic, the symmetrical, the centralized, the antithetical, the high lights, and the dots on the i’s; the focuses, the intensifications and steadyings. Art stops the passing moment after having made it “fair”; that is to say, made it easy to grasp, comforting, exalting, enlarging, unifying, vivifying to our poor hearts full of desire and our nerves lacking in vitality.

And one of the justifications of “Art” is that it not only gives what Reality denies; but that it prevents, or ought to prevent, our asking Reality for what Reality cannot give, and on

Reality's refusal, prevents our averting our eyes, or seeing Reality through the distorting fumes and lenses of the desire which it cannot satisfy.

The virtue of Art is that being our creation, our *creature* (also in the Spanish and old Italian sense of *criado* and *creato* = *servant*), compensates us by its ministrations for having to recognize Reality as our master. And, if we can learn the lesson, teaching us the difference between *what we like* and *what is*.

December, 1917.

### WHAT IS WASTE?

. . . *the offering to my essential godhead is WASTE.*—p. 14.

#### I

Before entering on a discussion of *Waste*, let me apologize for an inaccuracy of which my puppet Satan has been guilty. No more than any other winged creature (since 'tis a wise bird knows its father), that great Archangel can have been an eyewitness of the initial act of his own existence. Neither was his gossip Clio likely to furnish the information he thus lacked. That information, for us who happen to have it, points to the Waster, so far from preceding Man in the order of Creation, having himself been born of Man's works, perhaps a first-fruit of the Tree of Knowledge.

Indeed a reader fortified with the biological philosophy derivable from cheap manuals and expensive weeklies, may even remind me that Waste is not a scientific conception; that there can be no Waste in Nature, since Nature means the Whole of all things.

Neither can there be evil (nor, of course, Satan), since evil implies condemnation, and Nature (being less personal and hence more logical than the Deity) cannot condemn a portion of herself, cannot take exception to any of her own proceedings to the extent of calling them wasteful. *Waste* presupposes purpose; *Purpose* presupposes *Preference*; and Nature, inasmuch as the whole, can have no experience of these dis-

tinctions which are so inevitable to man, perpetually thwarted in his purposes and preferences by other portions of that impartial and imperturbable great whole.

Having thus rectified the mistatement committed by my Satan, let me pass on to why I have made him the symbolical representative of *Waste*, rather than of Evil in general.

Being a dabbler in psychology, I am, of course, aware that my identification of Satan with Waste has not been a result of any especial ratiocination on my part, but rather intuitive, meaning that it has come into existence unnoticed till it burst upon me full-grown, the result of dozens of converging bits of experience acting upon my—shall we say? tidy and parsimonious temper. In short, I am aware that I don't know how I came by it, *it* being the identification of Satan with Waste, but seem rather to have found it one day in that odd place behind one's tongue, where such uninventoried wisdom and nonsense is stored ready for use. But having found the notion, I think I can test and prove it, showing incidentally how *Waste*, which is incompatible with Nature, is lamentably compatible with Man.

Of course my starting point in this demonstration is the refusal to identify *Evil* with *Sin* or any disobedience to a law divine and human, since such law would first have to be shown not to be evil itself. Hence, in my crass philosophy, Evil is ultimately referable to Pain (or if you prefer, suffering), and escapes identification with Pain only because Evil need not be immediately accompanied by Pain, but only bring about an increase thereof. And if you object to the word Pain, understand that I mean thereby not necessarily something like a burn or even a bruise, but merely a condition of feeling which you want to avoid or be rid of. If there were no such thing as Pain (or suffering), including pain due to the sense of disobedience to law or fear of law's retribution, I cannot conceive what possible sense there could be in the adjective Evil, nor what symbolical significance in Satan. But now comes the *crux*, and the need for the (essentially human) notion of *Waste*. Pain, as is shown by those who hold that an Eternity of Hell is a cheap price for the pleasant certainty of Eternal Justice, Pain may be a means to something

which is not pain, or at least not pain to the particular individual in question. Again less altruistically: a smaller pain, like the dentist's dreadful wheel, may represent liberation from a greater one. It may also represent an insurance against death. This latter is, of course, the biological explanation of such sensitiveness as allows or involves pain; the disagreeableness of pain to the individual appearing in the eyes of Nature and the Biologist sitting at her right-hand, as amply compensated by the agreeableness of survival of the species, even though the species, being an abstraction, remains quite unaware of this biological advantage.

Be this as it may, and leaving biologists to their professional optimism, it became obvious to me that no *Pain as such* could be identified with Evil itself equivalent to Satan; but only Pain such as is out of proportion to its pleasant or, at least, less unpleasant results; in fact pain which is also a bad bargain. (Pray remember that Satan, though diddled by Faust and one or two other legendary persons, is always represented as offering you, as he offered the apple to Eve, what turns out a bad, a very bad bargain.) Such a bargain, seen from the human point of view, though not from Satan's, is *Waste*. This means that there is more pain incurred, or more pain prepared, or more pain inflicted, than there is pleasure, or comfort or that negative but supreme desideratum, a tolerable existence, gained in the transaction. For do we not say that there is Waste when a certain expenditure of time, material wealth, attention or opportunity is implied in the production of something less valuable to us than either of these things?

*Less valuable.* Thus *waste* like *good* and *evil* is a *valuation*; and in the only instances we can be certain about, a *human valuation*; although we can imagine that, to that particular Ram in the Thicket, the Angel's interference in Abraham's sacrificial arrangements, was decidedly wasteful. And here I am back at sacrifice! and at my definition of True Sacrifice as *Waste*, in contradistinction to *Barter*, which implies that each party to the exchange gets something he wants more than what he gives for it. And that is the reason why, as you can see further on, Satan is very down upon Barter, and insists

upon the kind of sacrifice which leaves himself as the only party who scores.

Summing all this up : Waste is an essentially human valuation ; it presupposes *purpose* ; and purpose presupposes *preference*. Now as we cannot conceive that the *whole which is a unity* can have a preference, we are constrained to think that Nature must, like the Deity, be perfectly satisfied with itself and its works ; or rather that, unlike the Deity, Nature, having no chance of experiencing dissatisfaction, cannot even be satisfied with itself and its ways.

It is quite a different case with Man. Man, being only a part of Nature, and a part moreover in frequent collision with a good many other parts, of this imperturbable, this never endangered, this neither dissatisfied nor satisfied Whole—Man, like the legendary housemaid, has feelings. And having feelings has preference for the feelings which are tolerable. And having preferences has gone so far beyond less intelligent creatures as to have conscious purposes ; and having purposes, has branded a particular kind of thwarting thereof as *Waste*. And would, I may venture to add, be better off if he were to develop this sense of *Waste*, and oftener think out his valuations in reference to it, not holding on quite so dully to the valuations which may (or not) have been suited to past, but are no longer suited to present, circumstances ; as, for instance, in the continued licensing and subsidizing Satan's Ballets of the Nations, which, from Satan's point of view, are indeed a perfectly acceptable sacrifice ; meaning thereby, from man's point of view, a total waste.

## II

Ah, but, objects the heckler, how can you know that ? (Pascal by the way similarly objected that while man had only a lifetime to set things right "*Dieu a l'éternité.*") Our war may bring forth, indeed certainly *must* bring forth, all manner of fine things we have never even thought of, even if it disappointed us in those we did think about : new things, unexpected things, things we might otherwise have gone without, and never so much as missed !

Quite true. So did the burning down of that Chinaman's farm whereby, in Charles Lamb's story, the owner and posterity were introduced to the wholesome delights of Roast Pig. Quite true. Indeed that is, no doubt, the very way in which man originally discovered, as the child in the adage is supposed to discover, the abuses but also the uses of fire in general. Our lives are so beset with all manner of disagreeables, that we have acquired a self-defensive optimism which tries, or pretends, to extract advantage out of them. But, alongside of such real alleviation of our wretchedness, this optimistic view of things contains only one solid item of truth, namely : that change results in further change, and that, given our lack of imagination and initiative, change often has to come in an unexpected, sometimes most undesired way, so that we get its good only in a matrix of bad, as we get the useful metals. But as the metallurgist who has learned more about these metals, can foretell where and how to extract them with least of such refuse, or even to turn that refuse into some useful earth, so also *Homo Sapiens*, whose sapience is embodied and typified in just such science, has evolved a certain power of testing, and reasoning on, experience ; foretelling results and to that extent, turning Change into his servant instead of himself remaining its (however much "compensated") victim. So for the dictum that good can be extracted from all evil, we ought to substitute the general truth that there is always *something new to be expected from a change* ; adding the further reflection that we are nearly always too stupid to foresee, and hence occasionally to choose, what that something new, and in so far, what that change, shall be.

So, although many unexpected novelties will doubtless come out of Satan's present Ballet ; and even, no doubt, novelties vexing him by the recognition expressed in Mephistopheles' remark that, do what the devil will, some good *does* come out of evil, yet these are questions of proportion. And I think that Satan can reasonably console himself with the fact that the destruction of millions of promising young bodies and brains, let alone of the money needed for educating their survivors, that our war, in fact, even if it result in a communistic Russian republic or a diplomatic League of

Nations, or even in Free Trade, Disarmament and Democratic Control all coming a little sooner, will nevertheless represent a balance of Waste sufficient to satisfy the most exorbitant claims of the Prince of Darkness. The world will eat roast pig ; but its house, its implements, will have been burnt in the roasting.

### III

I have tried to show that the notion of Waste is dependent upon that of *preference* in its various manifestations as aim, purpose, and choice. From this there follows that Man's chief instrument for diminishing *Waste* (whence Satan's detestation of the Tree of Knowledge) is of course *Discrimination*.

Take for instance the classic militaristic plea : that war produces certain virtues, like courage, fortitude, abnegation and comradeship (I will not add the "not to reason why," for that I regard as an only occasionally convenient mental vice), therefore that war is a good thing. Similarly the more shamefaced one that "National Service" reforms wastrels, teaches slovens to be tidy, and clodhoppers to move with grace, etc., therefore that "National Service" ought to be adopted. On the same lines it might be argued that Mohammedanism abolishes drunkenness ; and that, as was averred by Tolstoy's virtuous Aunt : "*Rien ne forme le caractère d'un jeune homme*" like a *liaison* with a *comme il faut* married woman. Apply discrimination to these, in themselves, indisputable generalizations ; reduce these various groupings to their components ; find out what it is in war which fosters manly virtues ; in National Service which reclaims wastrels and teaches deportment to clodhoppers ; in Islam which enforces teetotalism. Put your prudery in your pocket and find out the genuine educational elements that may exist in *liaisons* with married ladies. And ten to one, you will discern that these desirable elements are equally conceivable and even equally obtainable without respectively the extermination of fellow creatures, the methods of drill sergeants, the belief in Mohammed and Mecca, or even the practice (*à la Rosen-*

*Kavalier*) of discreet and refined adultery. Discriminate between what is wanted and what is not wanted, and you will by so much diminish the wasteful pursuit of the desirable through the undesirable.

All science goes on this plan of undoing, of analysing, the combinations of qualities and potentialities, often temporary and fortuitous, with which we are faced in everyday existence, and which we call *things*, *circumstances* and *facts*. Science ascertains, isolates, their components, studying the essential nature of each, and thus foretelling the different, the new, combinations into which they may be brought for man's safety and service ; thus a serum or antisepsis means that the combination called a disease has been analysed and studied in its components ; and the telephone or arc-light means that electrical and chemical agents have been separated out of the groups in which alone our fathers knew (or rather did not know) them, and recombined into other ones. And all this means *Discrimination*. Nay, Professor Kirkpatrick has similarly pointed out that all man's intellectual, and in so far moral, progress has been due to the increase in the number of what this psychologist has called "Free Ideas," meaning thereby perceptions, images, ideas, memories and expectations, which repetition under varying circumstances has separated from the everyday connexions and the momentary desires wherewith they originally presented themselves in our experience ; and by dint of the mind's automatic classifications, have gradually recombined into a contemplated, a thought-out, cosmos wherein they exist in all manner of different groupings independent of our likings and convenience, independent even of our concrete experience. That universe of causally-connected "free ideas" could not exist without discrimination, the discrimination which frees "red" or "heavy" or "hot" from the redness of *this* thing we call a rose, from the heaviness of that thing we call a lump of lead, from the heat of what we call the sun or a coal fire ; and thereby allows us to think of *other* things as red, or heavy, or hot ; and finally of colours, weight, and température in totally different references.

In the face of this it is odd to hear our latter-day intellectuals

talk of *analytic thought* as if it were of a mysteriously inferior kind, as if it were *destructive* as opposed to *constructive thought*, which we are all out for nowadays. But all constructive, that is synthetic, thought is on the basis, however unnoticed, of analysis, of separating what we want from what we don't want. We cannot build a house without previously breaking up a tree into planks and beams, a rock into stone, sifting sand from the shingle of a river-bed, and so on. And as to what we call the *World of Reality*, meaning thereby what stands for it in our mind, that is built up of similarly broken up blocks, and similarly sifted grains, of our concrete experience, freed from the divers mass thereof, and freed also from the likes and dislikes, the hopes and fears embedded in which we first gripped, or were gripped by, them.

So let me inscribe at the top of my copy book : *Discrimination is the foe of Waste.*

We all feel duly shocked when that dear old lady recommended a *liaison* with a married woman (but *comme il faut*, she hastened to add) as the thing "*pour former un jeune homme.*" It might be well if we learned to blush and shake our heads whenever we hear war excused on account of its production of manly virtues ; or (as by sundry latter-day sociologists) superstition invoked as a short cut to good citizenship. But Satan sees to our wasting our reprobation on Tolstoy's aunt.

#### IV

Much as they enjoy pointing out Satan's influence in the proceedings of their adversaries, people do not like admitting that Satan can have a hand in their own ; indeed that is the main reason of the unpopularity of my *Ballet*.

Now Satan has contrived once more (as Milton says) to extract evil from good by turning to his uses one of the habitual and most modern manifestations of that very hatred of wastefulness, which is among man's innate but more and more perfected weapons, against him.

For the instinctive aversion, the almost bodily recoil, felt by most persons against admitting to themselves that this war's monstrous mass of suffering can be useless, leads both

to the war's justification by all manner of aims and ideals, and also to the war's actual prolonging by the determination not to end it without such victory as will bring permanent future security. In this same manner the gambler goes on to stake his very last sovereign rather than accept his previous losses. All the Belligerents are saying (August, 1918), or what is more important, *feeling*, that *we must see to it that these men shall not have died in vain*. The attitude is masked and tricked out with all manner of catchwords ("last war ! last shilling ! last man ! lasting peace !") but what really matters is the attitude itself, which is that of *refusing to accept the fact of loss and waste*. And so the last remaining sons, brothers, husbands, are sent into the gulf to overtake the other ones. . . .

But although all this results in that perpetual attempt to tire out bad luck, there is in it something deeper than the gambler's frenzy. The hope that suffering brings forth good is the consolation, the *corroboration* (in the literal Latin sense), of the sufferer, keeping him from despair, enabling him to put out fresh doses of endurance ; and the religions of the past, like this present Religion of War, have always exploited this emotional belief, because it checks rebellion against an otherwise distressing order of the Universe, or constitution of Society. Probably, also, suffering of a certain degree and kind, especially moral and collective suffering, can result in a positive dread of its own cessation ; the psychic machinery set for endurance of misery would break under a sudden change of gearing ; so that the notion of good coming out of a prolongation of suffering is welcome to minds secretly (whatever their verbally expressed wishes) dreading a too sudden release. There seem to be two tendencies working to reinforce each other in the martyred soul : its suffering requires to be hated in order to be recognized as suffering, also in order to hate its alleged author ; but it has to be clung to in order not to strain the soul's insufficient elasticity. Be this as it may, the belief that good comes out of great suffering is, so to speak, an instinctive psychic mechanism ready to come into play at any moment, and increasingly at work in times like the present.

It is a *vital lie* or life-preserving *mirage*. What ! All those

youths mown down to no purpose? All those widows' and mothers' souls bled to no profit?

*Why not?* Save on the hypothesis of a benevolent Creator who is Himself part of the very scheme of compensation which invokes Him, there is no more reason why good should come out of this war than out of the pestilences and earthquakes in which our forefathers saw God's loving hand; for *good* means lessening the mass of suffering; and this war is piling it up.

That *good*, meaning experience and sympathy which go to diminish suffering, should, in some cases and rather in small proportion, arise out of suffering itself; and that we should try to extract this drop of antidote called Wisdom or Virtue, as the physician extracts a curative serum, out of our poison, means in reality that suffering is, on the whole, sterile and evil, and that mankind, and all the great automatic adjustments of the living creature, seek to have done with it.

So far from religious or ennobling, the notion of good being bought at the price of increased suffering seems to me depressing, ugly, and, symbolically speaking, savouring of blasphemy against the spirit. For what remains of the value of future good once you have deducted such a price as this war's suffering? Why, even if permanent peace could be thus purchased, the transaction would be a disgraceful admission of mankind's incompetence in what concerns it most. And the future generations, though obliged to accept the gift, might avert their eyes from the manner of its getting. Indeed our optimistic talk about *extracting good out of evil* is, perhaps, one of Satan's little ironical tricks for, in his way, extracting evil out of good.

August, 1918.

### SELF-SACRIFICE

*Satan disdains such barter of good for better, and he claims absolute oblation. My sacrifice is sheer loss . . . —p. 14.*

I

Some readers may object that all this talk about barter, about *forsaking what one wants less in order to obtain what one wants*

more, is worthy only of Satan ; is indeed one of the sophisms wherewith that celebrated logician (" *tu non sapevi ch'io loico fossi,*" as he says in Dante) tries to deprecate that share of man's aspirations and resolutions which God keeps for *His* own. My answer is, first ; that, even had I not known its the war has made me realize that men's most generous instinct, and loftiest acts of choice are (as my whole little play sets forth) the very thing which Satan is most careful to appropriate for his own pleasures. Secondly ; that, by making Satan demand self-sacrifice for its own sake, and scornfully reject what he calls *barter*, namely sacrifice of one good for another, I have given righteousness a wide and solid basis in human nature, instead of a mere foothold in the clouds whence to take a header into nothingness ; I have given to morality the sanction, the loveliness and dignity, of human joy ; and, by so doing, shown greater faith in it than those who scorn my views much in the same spirit as Satan scorns virtue which is not barren. But whether or not you deem me a mere limb of my own puppet-Satan, there remain one or two points I want to raise about this glorious and thorny subject of Self-Sacrifice ; for if, as Schubert has sung to an immortal tune, Love is the crown of human life, *Self-Sacrifice* is surely the crown of thorns, which certain moralists are for ever pressing upon life's wrinkled brow.

The chief point is that this whole important subject, and that of selfishness and unselfishness on which it depends, is obscured and confused by a misunderstanding of the nature of *Self*. Our practical moralists and lawgivers take for granted that because they see a number of individual Toms, Dicks, Harrys and so forth, all moving about separately, dressed in separate clothes, occupying in succession separate points of space, and very frequently colliding in their attempts to occupy the same—that therefore the *Self*, the self of each of the Toms, Dicks, or Harrys, is the simple unvarying unity of which passports, food-controllers and our whole judicial system take cognizance. Now this is not the case ; for if it were, mankind would have come to a timely end long since. So far from being such an unvarying unity, the *Self* is, in the first place, a highly variable and perpetually varying spiritual

(for I know you hate the words *psychological* and *subjective*) complex. But this is only the beginning of the question. This variously compounded and variously responsive innermost self of individual memory, reason and feeling, this intrinsic nucleus of every *ego*, does not abide in solitary nakedness. Life's tides and pools encrust it with a shell ; or it weaves itself into a cocoon, both of which are made of alien, and often imaginary, stuff, but both compacted into prolongations of the Self's own sensitive surface by the warmth and pressure, indescribable and incomparable, whereof the spoken symbol is the possessive pronoun *My*. Now those external things and abstract entities which we call *my interests, my family, friends, fortune, house, horse, dog, car, trade, art or politics*, can simultaneously, or turn about, thus become as much a part of ourself as is our skin, simply because we are susceptible of feeling pleased, hurt, comforted, chilled, disrupted or made whole, enlarged or diminished, *through* (which is not the same as *by*) the thought of them. But although, or just because, our inner, intrinsic, self lives thus encased in concentric circles of interests and possessions; the components of this sensitive periphery are not stable, but undergoing ceaseless integration and disintegration ; some growing in, others dropping off, only perhaps to grow back again the very next hour. For just as we can, for a moment, think and feel our own hand, foot, viscera, even our own whole character, as quite detached from ourselves and judged as alien things ; nay, even as we may be aware of a swollen gland, or a limb gone to sleep, or a tickling hair, as independent of, even hostile to, *ourselves* ; similarly some portion of those ever-changing concentric prolongations of ourselves, through the thought of which we feel and live, may become separated from our soul's sensitive substance, and turn into mere cold details of the alien surrounding world ; perhaps when whatever has thus extruded them from our warm self shall itself have dropped off, to grow back again into their place, sometimes becoming an aching portion of that self, their reintegration painfully expressed in what we call *regret* or *remorse*. Yet in truth we are vulnerable not in outer objects themselves, but in our thought of them. Thence the paradox that the dearly bought mess of

pottage, once its reality has stilled the cravings of Esau's belly, will not longer be an integral and dominating portion of Esau's soul as when he merely smelt its tempting fumes ; while, very probably, that birthright with which he parted so readily during hunger, may, once he realizes that it now belongs to Jacob, suddenly grow into the most painful fibres of his being.

This is not merely metaphor ; since what we call the "external world" which is the object of our feelings, of our desires, fears and preferences, is *our idea of it*, and therefore a part of our mind. Indeed it is this neighbourhood to our innermost self, this contact with our deepest spiritual (and perhaps material!) organs of pain and pleasure, which gives that counterfeit, that *thought of*, external world its paramount power over the self of which it is a part. Since, whatever else our *self* may be defined as being, it is first and foremost our capacity for feeling. Once this fact is grasped, I mean the much-neglected though obvious fact that we are all woven-round by ever-changing outer sensitive selves, much of the now derided hedonism of our grandfathers must be reinstated, safe from the modern philosophical heckler who points out that men are by no means always swayed by "self-interest," still less consistently pursuing "pleasure." For what such moralists call "self-interest" is rarely more than *their own view* of what *ought* to sway their neighbours' choice ; while the "pleasure" they speak of becomes a mere empty word whenever the relation between the supposed pleasure-giving object and the pleasure-feeling soul happens to be such that, as the phrase goes, *the pleasure has been spoilt*. Indeed the hollowness of so much fulfilled ambition, covetousness or love, is merely the symbolic expression of the fact that, instead of clutching a satisfaction, we often find ourselves possessors of some thing, or some power, the idea of which was once associated with pleasure, but whose reality is now a matter of indifference.

Now this view, which is the pyschologically correct one, has an immediate bearing upon the question of Selfishness and Unselfishness, and hence on the question—Satan's question—as to what constitutes *bona fide* self-sacrifice. Looking from outside and in the perspective of the majority's practical inter-

ests, moralists have always told us (I seem to remember something to the effect already in Xenophon) that altruism begins with maternal instincts and proceeds, leaving the self ever further behind, to the family, tribe, country, and finally to mankind at large. It would be more correct to say that love of child, family, tribe, country, and mankind at large, are successive expansions of Egoism ; the idea of these various creatures and abstractions being gathered, one after the other, into the warm depths of the self, growing into the fibres of the individual brain and nerves, until that lump of *otherness*, that alien, even abstract, something, has become so integral a part of ourself that the mere name of the child or family, the mere colours of the national flag, nay the mere words "humanity," "justice," or "liberty" will kindle the eye, send the blood throbbing to the temples, brace the muscles and subvert the whole habitual flow of our life till we exclaim, like the inspired prophet or the enamoured poet, "*Ecce Dominus meus fortior me, qui veniens dominabitur mihi.*" But that over-powering thought is *our* thought : Like the message of the God into the mind of the pythoness, like the bleeding heart of Jesus into the bleeding bosom of the ecstatic nun, it has descended into us only because we have stretched forth, poured our hot living substance into those chill unsubstantial images ; or, like Odysseus with the ghosts of his summoning, endowed them with the flesh and blood of feeling. What has really taken place ? Has the ego swooned away and the alter been absorbed into the ego ? Either or both, or perhaps neither. For the distinction between selfishness and unselfishness is merely the practical moralist's, the schoolmaster's or preacher's, movable barrier between conduct which mankind needs to encourage and conduct mankind needs to reprobate ; a useful, nay, indispensable distinction, so long as we remember that it is but a conventional one, and requires perpetual adjusting and shifting. But except by the use of this convenient moralist's partition, it is impossible to say where love of self ends and love of others begins, including under "others" standards, ideals, duties.

And that is surely a hopeful aspect of reality ; and by no means discreditable to our much-abused human nature. A fact which is moreover recognized as to his own eternal detri-

ment by my philosophical Satan, who says he has no personal experience of (let alone use for) such perpetual intermeshing (*metabolism* as biologists would say) of *self* and *not self*; such baffling protean metamorphose of altruism into egoism and egoism into altruism, which Satan, rightly or wrongly, calls "Love."

## II

All very fine, I hear my Reader objecting; but since what is cared for less is sacrificed to what is cared for more, the entire problem of self-sacrifice is simplified away by self-sacrifice really never taking place. In that case, pray when does your Satan come in and where are the thorough-paced sacrifices of which you make him boast?

I have put the answer to this objection into Satan's own mouth. Satan comes in whenever sacrifice is *not* such barter of less desired for more; whenever, as his definition of himself implies, *virtue is wasted*. As often as not, moreover, Satan comes in leaning (as the antique Bacchus leans on attendant Satyrs) upon one or both of those ministering minions of his, Delusion and Confusion.

In other words: although the sacrifice when it *is* self-sacrifice must be preferred, at the moment of making, by him or her who makes it; yet that moment is not the only one. We must enquire into the moments which follow and the moments which have preceded; asking first, for the question is the easier: what results from this preference, this self-sacrifice? And then what has caused its author and victim thus to prefer it? The example of Esau's subsequent regret for his birthright, and disgust at the bare thought of that pottage, serves as reminder that the liking of one hour may turn into the loathing of the next, nay, of every subsequent hour till the end of one's chapter.

The cruellest sacrifices take a few minutes for their decision, and a lifetime for their endurance; since self-sacrifice is oftenest the work of a dominating emotion, and emotions neither dominate for ever, nor do they while dominant allow the realization that they are subject to change. So that the full price of that self-sacrificing preference is rarely paid off at the

time; and rarer still foreseen in its full arithmetical reality: so much subtracted, so much added, so much multiplied, besides the original sum we thought of.

Thus, putting aside all frenzied mutilations of body or soul, all sacrifices of Atys and his more spiritual hierophants, let us take the instance of Satan's recent Ballet. The lad enlisting in the first months of this War, could not foresee four years of such existence among corpses, ordure and slaughter as is described in Barbusse's unflinching novel; any more than the girl who marries in compliance with her parents' wish can always realize the facts of marriage which she does not understand, with a man whom she does not love; whence the situation of, say, the virtuous wife in Ibsen's *Ghosts*. When a man enlists or a woman marries, the convenience and security, the orderly functioning of society, exact that promises should be carried out, decisions abided by, quite irrespective of the promise having been given, the decision taken, in ignorant or passionate haste, and carried out in years of disillusion and regret. Again, despite the Church's abundant worldly wisdom and fear of responsibility, there has never been a novitiate at all proportioned to the lifetime which the nun, once professed, passes in celibacy and abstinence, in hair-shirts not merely material, and in fasting of the soul perhaps as well as of the body. Speaking of noviciates and of nuns reminds me of that order of the Perpetual Adoration, where one member of every convent used always to lie prostrate and motionless, face downwards, on the altar flags in atonement of the world's blasphemies. That nun outstretched corpse-like in the winter dawn—there is a wonderful description of what Victor Hugo's hero sees after climbing to the chapel-window of the Petit Picpus—that nun has freely given herself for the vastest redemption from evil since that of her adored Master Jesus, and to eke out his sacrifice with the mite of her own. While she lies there, or when she rises again numb and staggering after those twelve hours of "Reparation," or prepared to stretch herself out again for another twelve, that nun may be perfectly happy, for she believes her sacrifice is acceptable and well worth making. But suppose she have doubts? Suppose—and all of us who disbelieve in Redemption through Perpetual

Adoration must suppose this—suppose all this nun's sacrifice is founded upon a misconception, on stupid rites of primitive magic misinterpreted by later though scarcely less ignorant ages ; suppose there *is* no eternal punishment whence to release souls, no original or mortal sin calling for vicarious redemption, no life save the earthly one which this woman might have spent bringing up children, doing useful work, or merely moving freely and happily, erect, warm, clean, and without sores ? In that case, in all similar cases (and while I write these words men by the thousand are lying outstretched in filth and wounds and horror compared with which that nun's penance would be bodily rapture), in all such cases the self-sacrifice has been of that genuine kind which is the oblation most grateful to the waster of Human Virtue.

And the case of the nun martyrising herself for the sake of a non-existent Heaven and Hell, leads me back to the other question : Granted that the sacrifice was freely preferred, what has brought about that preference ? My answer is : Before it can be made, self-sacrifice has always, and in direct or subtler manner, been suggested, asked for, claimed. We will leave out of account, as being too obvious, the querulous or shamefaced claiming wherewith, for instance, an invalid parent vetoes or enforces a daughter's marriage, while seeming to allow her all liberty of choice. Also the brow-beating insistence wherewith the social and religious code, embodied in some self-righteous Pastor Manders, drives Mrs. Alving back into the legitimate embraces of a profligate. "*Non ragioniam di lor,*" as Virgil says to Dante about the less interesting denizens of Hell. Let us rather lift scrutinizing, though not irreverent or unsympathizing, eyes to those other kinds of sacrifice, which we place, framed in gold, upon our altars, versify and set to music ; and contemplate with a sense of spiritual elevation very largely æsthetic and not entirely unlike the pleasure in virtue for virtue's sake of a certain connoisseur in moral beauty. Since there are sacrifices of self seemingly clean of all human claiming or accepting, inasmuch as they are sacrifices to what transcends humanity, to something impersonal, nay abstract, and therefore deemed unselfish, unsullied, unquestionable : a standard of conduct,

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an ideal, one's country, civilization, progress, freedom, justice, God.

As Mephistopheles remarked about the necklace bought for the speedier seduction of poor Gretchen, but hung instead on the Madonna's neck, there is nothing, however queer its origin, which offering in a church can't make respectable. Still, that origin, though overlooked, is not abolished, and I wish to point it out. These high, pure entities, ideal standards and noble abstractions, do not, as we incline to take for granted, reside in the Empyrean or *in vacuo*, but in those humble and far from perfect things, men's minds. And they exist there because they have been *put there* by tradition, education, example, in short by other men, also far from perfect though perhaps not always humble. Whence it arises that much of what seems free self-sacrifice has been claimed by the prompting of some tradition, taken for granted by some prejudice, extorted by the pointing finger of scorn or the hand-clapping, the patting-on-the-back of jolly good fellowship. The Suttee widow, even the legendary persons under the car of Juggernaut, were voluntary victims; and the lad brought up to think that not "to do his bit" of killing and being killed is tantamount to being a coward and a shirker, is, until conscription puts an end to subtler pressure, a free agent before the law, indeed treated with obloquy for refusing thus *to do his bit*, precisely because he is a free agent. But is he? What becomes of freedom of choice where there is ignorance and prejudice? And is sacrifice of self not suspiciously like sacrifice by others, whenever religion, custom, caste example and all the various kinds of social pressure, latter-day boycott and primitive taboo, undertake to mould your preference and guide it in the right direction? (These are the delicate ironies of life constituting my poor bored Satan's hourly little pittance of amusement.)

### III

That sounds monstrously ungenerous. For somehow we always talk as if self-sacrifice were never demanded except of ourselves, although we act as if it ought never to be refused

by others. Let us therefore keep clear in our mind, and in whatever conscience we may have, that *a sacrifice made is a sacrifice accepted*, and nine times out of ten demanded, exacted, by other persons. Hence not a matter of unsullied generosity. A person who accepts self-sacrifice from others is, as we all admit, a poor creature, a pauper, a parasite ; and one exacting it, is a tyrant. Should Causes, Principles, Ideals be judged quite differently ? Yet a Cause, a Principle, an Ideal, is cherished and preached by other people besides those who sacrifice themselves for it, and who are, not unfrequently, admonished to do so with a good grace or forfeit their neighbours' acquaintance. It is on account of this inner side to self-sacrifice, its necessary reverse of acceptance *by* others, even more than on account of that habit of claiming it *from* others because we ourselves would honour such a claim (on some other occasion perhaps) in our own persons—it is on account of this shabby, seamy lining of the martyr's glorious robe, that I should like to say : Look carefully at all Self-sacrifice, before making or asking it ; turn it inside out, be sure that it profits him or her who brings it ; for if it does not, it may be excusable, necessary, indispensable for every highest, vastest, most indisputable interest, yet nevertheless it is a sacrifice . . . well —*by others.*

And the high value put upon self-sacrifice, a value making such doubts as these sound cynical and almost blasphemous, is a sure sign (whatsoever else it may denote) of the smallness of its supply, as well of the exorbitant alacrity of the demand for it.

#### IV

And here I must point out that indignation with my ethical heresies has naturally made the reader overlook that although Satan prefers barren sacrifice of self to any other oblation, it being the *ne plus ultra* of his waste of all good things, particularly human virtues, this does not mean that Satan takes no pleasure, indeed his commonest pleasure, in sacrifice

not of self, but of others. He carefully explains that one reason of his predilection for what he calls *true sacrifice of self* is that it implies, often in the demand for it and nearly always in the acceptance, a sacrifice of others and *by others*; not necessarily, I hasten to explain, a sacrifice of others to the comfort, laziness, vanity, covetousness or sensuality of those who accept that sacrifice; not a sacrifice to what are accounted selfish desires; often on the contrary a sacrifice of others to that subtlest, most sensitive, part of self whose very existence goes so unnoticed that I have had to point it out: to the beliefs, prejudices, principles, political and religious dogmas and ideals, whose triumph adds a cubit to their votaries' spiritual stature, and whose disregard is felt by them as deepest disappointment, disruption and diminution. It is no paradox to add that the most ruthless sacrifice of others has always been carried on for just those aims on whose behalf we are most ready to sacrifice ourselves; and in proportion to our being really so; the implicit, sometimes the explicit, maxim of political and religious, indeed of all kinds of genuine, fanatics, being precisely that willingness to risk their own life or fortune, security or happiness (except the paramount but uncatalogued happiness of having their own way), constitutes a legitimate claim upon the life and fortune, security and happiness of others; moreover gives the right to punish refusal with the penalties, gaol, pillory, or scaffold, which they themselves would gladly endure for (what is in *their eyes*) the highest of all aims. Nay, does that readiness for self-sacrifice on their own part not justify the uttermost humiliation, the utter suppression of any creature who so much as casts doubt upon that aim? Thus nowadays the man who prefers victory or national honour, or the vindication of international law, or the Triumph of Democracy or a Lasting Peace to the extent of "giving" (as the Moloch-reeking phrase goes) his son to be killed for one or all of these objects, very naturally exacts that other fathers and other sons should share that preference. More natural still, he assumes towards the men whose equally decided preference happens to be for the literal observance of Christ's precept, the attitude of Mr. Eden Phillpotts to the "Conchies at Princetown."

“England for nothing they have won—  
Son of a Bishop, Son of a gun—  
Son of a slave—Son of a Hun. . . .  
Fanatics, curs, mistaken brave,  
Who England now for nothing have.”

How much that poem, especially its initial assertion that England *has been won* for these men by what they regard as England’s desecration, must have appealed to Satan’s sense of the comic !

## V

Since Self-sacrifice is so much in request, and always has been, does this not prove that it is useful, indispensable ? Of course it does. Wherever, actually or potentially, it is asked for (nobody ever asked or would have asked that silly little Ibsen girl to shoot the wild duck or herself !) it is pretty certain to be useful, perhaps indispensable, *to somebody* or *for something*. The question is *to whom* and *for what*? Always, evidently, to someone else ; otherwise it would not be sacrifice of *self*, but sacrifice of a part, say of the present part, of self for the sake of another, a preferred, perhaps a future or more permanent part, of self ; in fact it would be just what my Satan scornfully rejects as a kind of *barter*.

The vicarious sacrifice of a Son of God, let alone its dispelling all logical notions of justice on the Father’s part, belongs to the same system of utilities as the High Priest’s council that a man should die for the people. Indeed it is but another form of the loading of the community’s sins on to a he-goat and driving the creature into the wilderness. Historically regarded, self-sacrifice is closely connected with ritual expiation and propitiation. A willing human victim is more convenient to the sacrificer and far more flattering to the Divinity than a recalcitrant ram or heifer, and as the offering of these is useful, so much more is that. Primitive men compound with their neighbours for injuries done or received ; and all men, primitive or not, compound with tyrants for a modicum of liberty. Now besides vindictive neighbours, man was thought (indeed

is still officially asserted) to be exposed to greater losses still from the resentment and caprice of the Great Neighbour *in Cælis*, the centralized successor of the countless little malignant and touchy ancestor-neighbours under the hearth or the bethel-stone. Indeed a workaday and truly human morality may have taken so long to elaborate (and is not elaborated to this day), partly because of the supplies of various kinds of self-suppression, and suppression of others, perpetually needed to keep those multitudes of little paternal neighbours below ground, or the great paternal neighbour which is in Heaven, from sending us famine and pestilence instead of flocks and harvests and a numerous progeny. So, more than this or that individual act of self-sacrifice, however momentous, what mankind has always praised and recommended, is the general willingness to be sacrificed, answering in however inarticulate a manner, to the need for an abundant reserve thereof against all emergencies. "*Si vis pacem para bellum*," might be paralleled and paraphrased (only that mankind rarely formulates such truths even to itself) as follows: If you wish to escape scot free yourselves, see to having a sufficiency of sacrificial victims to offer up in your stead, rams-in-the-thicket, scape-goats, "*Albi, Clitumni, greges*" ever handy; but best of all, plenty of heroic and saintly men and women fattened with praise for martyrdom.

A shocking view of human nature? But how except by some such unformulated, unconscious automatic habit can we explain the paradox that while mankind has admitted to being anything but saints and paladins, indeed has cheerfully confessed to preferring the fleshpots, it has at all times set its preachers and teachers to inculcate ascetic and quixotic ideals, self-sacrifice in every shape? On the principle, perhaps, of aiming high in order not to hit too low? Nay, for such high-flown aims, absolute purity of body and soul and love of neighbours like oneself, rather defeat that object, make the generality despair of aiming at all; and leave such far-fetched virtue to the very few who have leisure and special inclination for it. Mankind requires paladins, saints, and martyrs not as models (having no wish to imitate!) but as substitutes. And it demands such a holy class of persons, set apart by nature and

tradition and training, just in proportion as its own mass, its own substantial self, is indifferent to, incapable of, ideals of any kind except when such ideals become a pretext for such exceptional bouts of recklessness and obstinate pugnacity as war calls forth and keeps up. Is not England at this moment (1918) still getting its sons killed off from sheer hatred of Autocracy? England which began this war, as the Tzar's ally!

Be this last point as it may, self-sacrifice has always been preached, painted in frescoes of Indian caves and golden pages of missals, sung in every Church, shown on the stage, and in poems and novels, as the one really lovely, the one truly satisfying, thing. And as self-sacrifice does really oftenest require certain noble energies and impulses, delicate tenderness and solemn steadfastness, which appeal (notice how they find expression in all music and even in architecture's uplifting and pacifying lines) to man's æsthetic longings, it seems natural and proper that mankind should applaud, enshrine in quite disinterested manner and moments, those potentialities of immolation to its wants whereof an abundant supply may, at some other moment, give less disinterested satisfaction to any or most of them. Do not misunderstand me: a supply, answering to a demand, not of this good result or that, requiring to be bought, perchance, at so heavy a price; but a supply of sheer willingness to pay that price, to become that ransom. Hence a reservoir, overflowing perpetually, of mere passionate capacity and longing for sacrifice of self without why or wherefore, such as floods the soul of Tolstoy's Besukhow when he buys a pistol to shoot Napoleon; and in more piteous way, the poor little girl in Ibsen's play, who shoots the Wild Duck and herself as unasked offerings to her grotesque family. Hence we are daily putting a halo, not round the deed which is useful, but round the deed which we believe *may* be useful and know for certain to be disagreeable and difficult to those who do it. We pay a mere fee to the surgeon who saves another's life; but it is "roses, roses, everywhere and myrtle mixed in the path like mad," it is flags and trumpets, and organ sound for the man who has victoriously exposed his own.

With the certainty of all unintentional, unconscious auto-

matic processes, such admiration, such sanctification, such apotheosis acts as natural man's inducement to overcome in others the wholesome repugnance which he feels to sacrificing himself.

## VI

But why should self-sacrifice have been thus indispensable ? Surely because something else has not been forthcoming. Something needing either to be done or refrained from ; something needing to be understood, felt or imagined, something mankind, for one reason or other, has happened to be unwilling or unable either to do or to forgo ; to understand, feel or imagine.

There is symbolical truth, although misinterpreted, in the religious notion that sacrifice, and especially self-sacrifice, is a ransom for Man's commissions and omissions. A debt has been incurred to other men, to Gods or God, to the Great impersonal Otherness we call the Universe, whose nature we lazily ignore, and whose statutes we violently infringe ; and that debt is paid not by the individuals, oftenest dead and forgotten, nor the long-lapsed generations who have heaped it up ; it is paid by someone else, an unwilling or willing victim, often an innocent one, occasionally a hero or a martyr.

The tithes have not been paid, the sanctuary of earth or of the mind has been defiled by pharisees and hucksters ; Jesus must expiate upon the cross : *Agnus Dei, qui tollis peccata mundi.*

Neither are these debts always of the kind thundered at by prophets ; they oftenest represent lack, not so much of righteousness, as of knowledge, good sense, lack of that other side of virtue called wisdom, without which virtue has all the effects of vice. Indeed the debts are often humble and humdrum, scarce noticeable save for their multiplication. The Augean Stables require a hero to plunge into their muck because, for centuries perhaps, both Kings and hinds have defaulted in the daily work of pail and besom, perhaps not understood (absorbed in their own grandeur or their wretchedness) that such things as pails and besoms could be invented, or

that accumulated dung stank and bred pestilence. Not only caverns of prehistoric men, but the world for ages after, and large parts thereof even nowadays, have been such Augean Stables, partaking of cesspool, kitchen-midden and ancestral sepulchre ; and so far from being surprised thereat, we ought to wonder at anything swept and garnished having emerged. By which I mean, that we must not be hard on the past for having incurred so vast a debt, required such constant expiations and atonements on our part. But without being unduly hard even on our own poor selves, we might begin taking thought for these matters, and feel a little ashamed and impatient, not with our neighbours or forbears, but with our own selves practising or demanding self-sacrifice quite unsuspicuous that self-sacrifice implies such unpaid debts, and that unpaid debts are consonant neither with our safety nor with our honour. For, to descend from high religious language (suitable to my evil Archangelic Puppet), sacrifice of others and sacrifice of self, and most particularly sacrifice of self accepted or claimed by others, are, however inevitable, deeds of waste, and constitute the measure of human maladjustments.

This holds good in large and rare, and what is more important, in small and common, matters. Children ought not to be neglected and require fishing out of ponds at the risk of a passer-by's life ; nor houses to be so built and heated and lit that firemen have to be burnt to prevent their burning down ; there ought to be no contaminated water producing cholera and self-immolation of doctors ; nor, since I have used the word, contaminated husbands exacting self-sacrifice (*à la* Mrs. Alving) from over-virtuous wives ; there ought to be no need for the heroism of the rescuing party or the lifeboat ; mines and waves should be better dealt with, or men not induced to face their dangers for a few tons of coal or a catch of herrings. There is absolutely no reason, save mankind's stupid slavishness, why there should be an *Instans Tyrannus* and a corresponding pious victim braving his threats and wiles ; there is no need for Marats and therefore for Charlotte Cordays ; I mean that Marat should have remained an unread maniac in Grubstreet, and Charlotte an obscure happy young woman at home. Above all, in my humble opinion, there has been no

necessity save the indifference and prejudice of the various Nations, their smug scepticism of warning voices like Marcel Sembat's and E. D. Morel's, their self-satisfied or rapacious subservience to Kaisers and Krupps and Delcassés and the various exponents of National Honour and *Sacro Egoismo*, there has been no necessity, save mankind's being at any given moment precisely as slack and stupid as it happened to be, why there should not have been a League of Nations (or no need for a League of Nations!) once there were telegraphs and railways; no necessity why modern science and organization should have been applied to the preparation and carrying out of such sacrifice and self-sacrifice, well! as we have witnessed for four mortal years.

*Peccata mundi.* Sins of omission and commission, lack of wisdom paid for in waste of Virtue; all inevitable, since they have not been avoided. All paid for, expiated and usually in the inevitable foolish manner of making new debts of omission and commission for future men and women, heroes and martyrs, to expiate. I have admitted that since there are such maladjustments, such debts, there may require to be such vicarious payments. Neither would I give indifference, dishonesty, and heartlessness, by whom these debts have mainly been contracted, a plea for loading more self-sacrifice on others by refusal to share in it themselves. So much I would premise. But having seen this war, I would turn to those strong and generous enough for voluntary sacrifice, exhorting them not to waste their virtue, their sorely-needed generosity and endurance, from any such shyness or humility as shrinks from scrutinizing a duty before answering its call, which is often the call of other persons who happen not to be called upon themselves. If really useful, a difficult and painful renunciation will not lose in utility by being cleansed of the lazy acquiescence, false pride and weak imitativeness which so often result in more harm than the sacrifice results in good. If men are *to do and die*, for mercy's sake let them *question why* as thoroughly as possible; else some other men are sure to be required to *do and die* as a consequence of this blindness and haste. If people had questioned *why*, not only this war, but nearly, perhaps, every other modern war would have been spared us. Moreover it so

happens that the injunction to die (and, which the poet left out, also to *kill*) without *asking why* is essential only to warfare, not to other forms of human co-operation ; in war there must be such unquestioning doing and dying on one side because there is unquestioning doing and dying on the other ; but if both parties insisted on questioning, there might be a little killing by criminals or fanatics, but no more killing and being killed as an honourable trade, indeed as the most honourable of all trades.

However, whether or not people should as yet look at self-sacrifice very sceptically before accepting to accomplish it in their own persons, this much the war has shown : it is high time to insist as a rule of honour and decency upon one thing, namely, that all men and women should scrutinize with the most hostile scepticism any act of self-sacrifice before, on any score of ideals, programs or principles, they *accept*, they *demand* it, from others. We require to become thus sceptical of the rights of our own beliefs, just in proportion as we recognize those beliefs of ours, religious, political, or ethical, to be such that we ourselves would be sacrificed for them ; since, as I have already pointed out, the willingness to sacrifice ourselves begets a willingness to sacrifice others to the same aims or standards. And to persons like so many in war time, who are thirsting for immolation of self, I would offer this little counsel of perfection : begin by sacrificing some of your belief in your own ideas, to the extent of not imposing those ideas on the conduct of others. For that also, though it never enters your heads, is also a sacrifice of self, and a useful and arduous one ; since it is the sacrifice of what you care for more than your life, fortune, or children : the sacrifice of your most sensitive, most insidious and ruthless part of self.

## VII

It may be that there still is, and will long be, the need for accepting, nay exacting self-sacrifice. But in that case do let us at least feel and show decent shame in the presence of such an ugly necessity, humbly confessing it to be the brand and badge

of our individual or collective, our inborn or inherited, shortcomings.

So far we have no proper manners, intellectual or moral, about such things ; no sense of fitness and decorum. We apologize for upsetting a cup of coffee on our host's carpet ; but we do not feel humiliated, when we have accepted, even when we have claimed, that the blood of martyrdom should be poured out for our advantage and at our bidding. Instead of diminution in our own esteem, we feel that this sacrifice brought by others has added a cubit to our stature ; "*On les persecute, on les tue,*" as Bérenger rhymed, "*Sauf après un lent examen, à leur dresser une statue pour la gloire du genre humain.*" The same applies, I mean the filching a part of the martyr's crown to deck the collective, and sometimes misshapen, skull, equally when there has been no need for a *lent examen*, a slow revision of the cruel sentence ; indeed when, instead of being persecuted as heretics and warlocks, the lesser brothers and sisters of Joan of Arc have been urged and cheered to self-immolation, and the commemorative slab been set up within the twelvemonth.

This is a strange and by no means seemly matter, hence worth examining for possible correction. To understand it we must realize that it is part of the excellent grace of all feelings of admiration that they make him who admires participate, to that extent, in the quality which awakens them, so that the crowning munificence of beauty, purity, gentleness or power, is that it beautifies, cleanses, makes gracious, and raises out of mediocrity, if but for an instant, the soul delighting in its contemplation. This, to my thinking, is one of the noblest, the most consoling, facts of our nature. The greater is my disgust and indignation at our allowing Satan to turn just this to his unchaste purposes. For ever since mankind began (though let us trust not everlasting till mankind comes to an end !) we have turned canonizations of martyrs into public rejoicings, and lapped up the wine of self-conceit from the libations poured on the pyres where demi-gods and saints have suffered for our sakes. Have I not, in that land of France which she delivered, eaten *civet de lièvre* or pickled walnuts off plates adorned with the trial and burning of Joan

of Arc, accompanied by descriptive couplets? A pardonable concrete bit of hero-worship, which, however childish and grotesque, may furnish an appropriate symbol, and, who knows? perhaps a tiny sample, of what nine-tenths of hero worship are made of.

Like primæval savages, we identify ourselves with the victim killed for our hunger, bodily or spiritual. We swell with the pride of Kinship, almost of participation, where it would be more fitting to grovel in self-abasement, or at least lower our eyes, in the presence of the holocausts brought to our often unlovely lives, our suspicions and panics, to our shoddy myths and worm-eaten ideals; to all the years and centuries of our commissions and omissions. Satan, that obscene æstheté, is greatly tickled. And before all the Belligerent Peoples set to fortifying their self-esteem at the sight of this war's miles of heroic, youthful graves, it might be well that someone should repeat the warning to Claudio when about to claim self-sacrifice from Isabella :

“ . . . Thou art not noble;  
For all the accommodations that thou bear'st  
Are nursed by baseness.”

### VIII

“ No wonder you chose Satan for your sp̄okesman. Like him you cast doubt upon good. Like him, you would leave us nothing to admire, nothing to praise, nothing to look up to.” Nay, what I would cast doubt upon, or rather ask you to question, before making over sure, are those things typified by self-sacrifice, which are called, and sometimes really are, *good*; but which require for their existence ignorance, violence, selfishness, or slackness, and whose essence is suffering; which is what *I* mean by *evil*.

As regards the second accusation, my answer is as follows : I leave, “ I exhort you to set up, for your admiration and veneration, for your loving, wondering piety, a thing which has hitherto not received its due share of honours : the happiness, bought at no price of suffering and entailing no debt thereof.

Life is so set round with causes of misery, that we have

need to be vigilant and resolute against all waste and desecration of its possibilities of joy. In the world as it is, how few are the things, people, moments, which can be safe, clean, strong, innocent of harm, fertile of good, satisfying, consummate, even in the humblest fashion ! Hence everything which is so, be it plant or animal or work of art, be it half-hour or half-minute of the commonest happiness, should be precious and honourable in our eyes, approached with reverent hands and thoughts, and, more than the virtue tortured for our pride or profit, held sacred in our disinterested remembrance.

October, 1918.

### THE FUTURE

*“ You, ever-disembodied Ages-to-Come, represent the no less needed assistance of a no less apocryphal Future.”*—p. 27.

#### I

At the very moment I was meditating on my Satan's remarks upon this subject a friend of mine suddenly broke in upon my thoughts by saying : “ People don't think enough about the future ! ”

To me, on the contrary, it seems that people *do* think enough about the Future ; indeed, at this miserable moment of the world's history (“ Last war ! Lasting Peace ! this must never happen again ”)—this must be continued *ad lib.* : to prevent its happening again), a great deal too much.

What people do *not* think enough about is that side or aspect of the Present which happens not to interest their immediate desires and aversions, hopes and fears ; a portion of the present in which, as in an unnoticed seed, the future is sometimes contained. In short, what people do not think enough about is the *other*, the *non-ego*, the *not-here*, the *not (to us at this moment) interesting*. If we thought habitually of what I have thus called the *other* (*other* people, *other* places, *other* moments, *other* qualities, *other* relations, *other* everything and anything) ; if we cared to know it with reference to its own existence, characteristics, causality and necessity, as distinguished from reference to *our* temporary feeling and convenience, we should hardly require to trouble our heads about

the Future, since the Future, or nine-tenths of it, is contained in that *not ourself, not here, not interesting*, and that whole unattractive *other's* present and past. There is deep symbolic truth in Christ's advice not to give thought to the morrow, once this fragmentary sentence is brought into connexion with that other essential item of Gospel philosophy, namely, to think of the *Other in its own terms*, or, expressed in a personal manner, to do unto others as we would be done to, which means to think of others as equally real with ourselves.

For, thinking of the morrow as preached against by Christ, or at least as practised by H. G. Wells and all the minor prophets of the Press, consists in little besides attributing quite disproportionate importance to our own present needs, preferences and prejudices, turning that mysterious blank space called the Future into a dumping-ground for our own pre-occupation, the "sphere of influence" of our own passionate and imaginative exploitation; instead of regarding it as the open and unknown country where we and our fussy vicarious egotism can, thank the Lord, be escaped from !

## II

The friend who complained that people *didn't think enough of the future* was, by no accidental coincidence, one of those who insist that this war should be continued until we can be sure that it is the last. It was still less a mere accident that another friend, who thinks that if the war continues it will also be repeated, should have made a remark in the contrary sense, viz., "It is rather discouraging that when people or peoples set about being far-sighted, they should nearly always see what does not matter or what cannot exist."

And naturally. For people's imaginative and ratiocinative inertia is rarely broken except by lively feeling. If they set to thinking about the Future, whether in this world or in the next, ten to one you will find that they are uncomfortable or frightened or annoyed with something in the present. Therefore they think of the Future with reference to that temporary feeling. They set aside what they call the Future as the happy hunting-ground of the Present, making it first and foremost a *reversed* present; the only unreversed thing about it

being, of course, themselves or rather their likes and dislikes. Now there is really no reason why the Future should be a *reversed present*, or a compensation or retribution for the present, except in so far as the behaviour of the present happens to be conducive to such reversing, compensation or retribution. And this can happen only to a limited extent, because (which we always overlook) the Future is mainly determined by something further back than the present, by something summed up as constitution, nature, possibility, fatality, by which the present is occasionally humoured but just as often thwarted. In biological, Mendelian, terminology, the Present does not itself exhibit all the hereditary determinants of the Future; and Ages and Civilizations, like babies and foals and green peas, are the offspring as much of forgotten ancestors as of their own, often well-intentioned and fussy, fathers and mothers.

It is funny but tragical to watch how all of us think of the Future (and we rarely think at all of it or indeed of anything whatever save under the stress of desire or discomfort or fear) as a nice blank space of the map with no inhabitants diminishing our elbow room, and with no laws or customs of its own, but only such as we colonizers shall introduce. Indeed the Future on Earth, like the Kingdom of Heaven, is not much more than an imaginary colony, Utopia or City of the Sun, sent forth by the discontented, or as we put it, the *idealizing* present.

For since emotion is what makes men think of the Future at all, little addicted as they are to thought which is not "practical," i.e., concerned with their own immediate likes and dislikes, they cannot help thinking of the Future *sub specie* not *aeternitatis* but *praesentis*. Moreover of the most variable and evanescent of present items: present moods, fears and wants; *sub specie*, shall we say *ephemeritatis*. Thence it so often happens that, as remarked, the more farsighted people set to being, the falser also will their views tend to become. And it is the people who say that their *children must not live through a war like this one*, who are sending out the boys who were children four years ago, and will be sending the children of to-day three years hence. *September, 1918.*

## III

Another reason for not spending lives and treasure to prevent war in the Future, is that besides entailing war in the present, we do not know what or how the future will be, except this much: that new incalculable and unsuspected elements will go to its making; and make it in so far different from, perhaps inconceivable by, the Present; even as this Present was quite inconceivable by even a near Past; as this war was inconceivable (or at least not conceived of!) at the moment of its declaration.

We intellectuals, especially, have got into the habit of thinking, or at least talking, too much of the future. The craving for an aim, a goal, a direction, which is an æsthetic, a quasi-organic, craving like that for symmetry and rhythm, makes us uncomfortable when we are at a loose end, and replaces the After Life, we no longer actively believe in, by the Future of Mankind. The more so because those who train—if it may be called training—and guide our thoughts are but the unfrocked successors of a priesthood which trafficked in after-life. The men of sedentary, unadventurous habits of life, also the men who require to be Sir Oracles, lastly the men with the natural belief (allied to powers of verbal expression) in phrases and formulæ, who formerly would have been priests, preachers, medicine men, now find it pay to be men of letters. The notion of *living for the future*, of testing the claims of an (alas) too-too solid present by the cloudy needs of an imagined, a problematic future, is therefore natural to people of our stamp, who toil not neither do we spin; or rather, who consider that our nets of ideas and words can hold Reality in their meshes and haul up miraculous draughts from the unplumbed abyss.

This much may be brought forward in our defence: that there always really has been, and is, too little consideration for the remoter future in all the practical half of mankind; a ruthless expropriation, confiscation and devastation by the hurried, hustling, starving, or otherwise vacuous present, like the destructive agriculture, called by German geographers *Rauf-Bau*, which cuts down the tree to get the fruit, deforests

and desiccates a country in order to make railway-sleepers, or (as happened in the Maremma under Napoleon) spreads malaria to manufacture potash. *That* way of treating forests, rivers, mines, and also small children and women in factories, explains why latter-day intellectuals are setting up a worship of the Future; although this barbarous hand-to-mouth practicality had no doubt been fostered by the former universal identification of the future with the life beyond the grave, wherein there is neither marrying nor giving in marriage, nor anybody who minds barren mountains, waterless deserts, or malaria. Be this as it may, our guides and philosophers have made the future into their protectorate. Indeed when we find ourselves suddenly carried away by primitive passions or harnessed to superannuated institutions (it was Tarde, I think, who said that we should have no wars if we had not inherited armies and the belief in them), as in the present war, we intellectuals, thus taken by surprise, hasten to justify such unexpected upsetting of all our cherished notions (think of J. M. Robertson and the various Peace Societies) by deliberate concern for the future. And, in another field, do not sundry sociologists, for instance Kidd and better minds than he, counsel obscurantism lest mankind commit "Race Suicide" by eating of the (Neo-Malthusian) apples of knowledge?

Now why, since we are not to sacrifice the future to the present, should we, on the other hand, sacrifice the present to the future? Why should one claim be worse than the other, the claim which is certain than the claim which is less certain? Why should we kill, starve, ruin ourselves and others to-day, in order to avoid killing, starving, and ruining to-morrow? Are we quite sure that what we call the future *is* the future, indeed anything except an imaginative (and imaginary) Annexe to our Present? Moreover, is it not high time to insist that, when all is said and done, the least hypothetical, the most experimentally ascertained, item about the relations between Present and Future happens to be that a good, prosperous, healthy, wise, humane, and *happy*, future is born of men living prosperously, wisely, healthily, humanely, happily in the present; rather than of those who, like the

fanatics alluded to in the Gospel of Matthew, have made themselves eunuchs for the Kingdom of Heaven ? for that City of God, which could be a reality only in the progeny they were mutilating away.

## IV

And since I have spoken of our intellectuals as the latter-day successors of more picturesque priesthoods, I may as well add a word about the Religion of the Future they are attempting to set up at our expense ; and the cognate attempt of some of them to renovate the old commandment " Increase and multiply " as part of that religion, which is also frequently described as a worship of " Life." All of which leads some of them to declare or insinuate that it might be just as well to use some of the old temples and cathedrals as, at all events, temporary conveniences for that new (and true) form of belief and worship.

Now it seems to me that the old religions whose laws and sanctions were efficacious in regulating human conduct [indeed in proportion to their efficacy] did most of whatever they really accomplished by an appeal to selfishness. Ghosts and Gods had most unpleasant methods of claiming obedience to their regulations ; the Deluge, the fiery overwhelming of Sodom and Gomorrah, the Plagues of Egypt, the pestilences punishing the incest of Oedipus and the abduction of Chryseis, did not appeal to the Higher Feelings only ; they were not in the Future, but in the Present and a most disagreeable Present. On the other hand the After-Life which replaced such (occasionally unpunctual) chastisements in the moralizing machinery of later creeds like Christianity and Islam, was also, however conducive to solidarity and decent behaviour, an appeal first and foremost to selfishness. The after-life, which was thus efficacious, was not the life of our unknown descendants, but of our very intimate selves ; and hence came, I venture to think, its substantial power sufficient to have left a powerful shadow (moral habit and taste) when the substance of the belief was gone.

But the Life of the Future is by no means the same thing as the Future Life. It is not *our* life, but *other people's* life ; and that can never have a hold, a weight sufficient to compete successfully with the more pressing temptations and inconveniences of our own poor existence. At best those capable of feeling such imperious imaginative concern for unborn generations must (and probably ought to) remain a minority ; a minority more and more intelligent and critical as it becomes more and more swayed by such ideal motives. And among the results of this minority's increased intelligence and scepticism may quite well be some such views as the following : that the cultus of "Life" as such is a mere superstition ; the cultus of altruism, solidarity, what we call "good" not much better sanctioned ; except, and in so far, as the "life" be *happier* life ; and except, and in so far as, "good" represents an increase of happiness. Also that the adjective "higher" applied to motives and habits will be recognized as vanity and vexation unless the "heights" referred to be defined no longer as frozen peaks, to which ascetics and supermen take flight, but Elysian valleys for ordinary mortals and their offspring.

Should these points be recognized, there will follow this corollary: Happiness for happiness, there can be no imperative bidding us sacrifice the evident happiness of the present generation for the hypothetical happiness of a future one ; that alleged imperative frequently cloaking the "constructive thinker's" insistence that the future shall be "constructed" on *his* plans, and the Present furnish the wherewithal, the price, of such construction.

And before leaving our Intellectuals and the Worship of the Future they are preaching to this miserable present, let me submit to them what follows : that among the many surprises of the future (the real future which will have become the present) there may arise out of increasing possibilities and habits and purpose of tolerable existence, and out of a gradual better understanding of Man and Nature and their relations, a new faith, justified or not, but like the old faiths mainly unreasoned, rule-of-thumb, intuitive, emotional, made out of the repeated experience, the vague expectation, *that happiness breeds hap-*

*piness and misery breeds misery.* Such would be the faith of fairly happy men. But our past and present faiths are born of wretchedness ; they are the justification of misery, the consolation for misery. And the worship of the Future, with its ritual of sacrifice, its promise of remote compensation, is surely just such another one, an expression not of man's power to do, but rather of his failure.

Let me sum up the gist of the foregoing notes and of the passages to the same effect in my little allegoric play. I distrust, and want to make my readers to distrust, any turning of the future into an object of worship, whether a Moloch calling for sacrifices, or a companionable Consoler, something like the insipid Jesus of later Christianity, who can be trusted to settle everything to our taste and to tell us that we were always in the right. The Future is neither. It is a part of Reality ; a continuation of the Present, which itself is a continuation of the Past. And it is mysterious for the prosaic reason that we cannot yet recognize all the factors which have gone to make it (and us) in the past, still less the factors which are making it in the present. That mystery, however prosaic, should be respected ; moreover, we had better not take its name in vain, lest it smite us. There are actions which, convenient to the Present, are manifestly a sacrifice of the Future. There are not many sacrifices of the Present which can be proved to be proportionately beneficial to the Future.

So, returning to the *Ballet of the Nations*, this war happens to be a sacrifice of the Present and of a portion of the Future visibly contained in the Present, namely the Present's best life and most of its wealth, let alone the Present's good-will and good-sense, which are also part of the Future's inheritance. And if we want future peace, we had better stop the present war, which is accumulating the obstacles to peace, namely misery, vindictiveness and delusion of all sorts.

September, 1918.

## THE MUSE OF HISTORY

*"History helps me in my shows with her so-called LESSONS."*—  
p. 26.

## I

It has been quite fair to make Satan and Clio herself, neither of whom I like, enumerate, as so many merits, some of the very reasons I have for disliking the Muse of History. Some of these characteristics arise from, and all are overshadowed by, the circumstance which sets me most against her.

I know the Muse of History is a sycophantic partisan; a pretentious, often ignorant, humbug. She dotes on Satan, cloaking in exemplary denunciations what psychiatry might call a sadistic taste for works of his which only dirty the memory and spread retaliative infection to the feelings. In the still recent Past her feeding bottle (for she has no milk, which is human kindness, in her majestic bosom) nourished that devastating allegorical French female called *La Gloire*. In our own times she has been the nurse of all the artificially incubated Nationalisms and Irredentisms, from the one which near fifty years ago wrenched the Alsatians willy-nilly from France, to that which is restoring at this present moment the same unconsulted people as "stolen goods," as might be an umbrella or a hatbox. In this connexion she has desecrated that most modest of decent saints, "Jehane la Bonne Lorraine," into a tinselled wax doll, such as the purlieus of St. Sulpice breed on altars symmetrical with those of Notre Dame de Lourdes. She—am still indicting Clio—has abetted ever so many breaches of the peace, besides committing endless frauds and adulterations. I am aware of it all, and much besides; and dislike her in consequence. Yet, I confess that what I really least forgive her is that, calling herself History, she is also a Muse.

Before entering on this my personal plea against her, let me safeguard myself from any suspicion of lack of respect for either classical Antiquity or its divinest daughters, the genuine Muses. That Clio should have been accounted one in Greece is, I like to think, mere accident, the accident of

Herodotus, of all men the most impartially and naively interested in the bare *how* and *why* of human concerns, having dedicated each of his chapters to one of those nine sisters of the Delphic God in whose precipitous and stony sanctuary he read out loud his delightful manuscript to assembled Hellas ; the first chapter (and by an easy confusion), the whole work and all similar ones being henceforward placed under the patronage of the eldest sister, Clio. This view of mine is founded on the fact that Herodotus himself, and the whole of classical Antiquity, perhaps because their world was so abundantly adorned, garlanded on altar and door-post, with art and poetry, did not require to put History to the same insidious, dramatic and æsthetic uses as have later, uglier ages, who more and more turned the Recorder, correct or incorrect, of Events into a purveyor of ideal emotions, largely for the pastime of the Ages-to-Come and other bored and futile persons. This much, lest the reader imagine that, because I don't want Homer and Virgil used as spelling-books for little boys, I lack respect towards the Gods of Olympus. As regards the other notion that I may be devoid of æsthetic sensibilities, I joyfully seize this opportunity of inditing a hymn (however prosaic) of praise to the Sacred Nine (always excepting Clio).

## II

To solace and sustain Man's spirit with a sufficiency of such emotions of greatness, significance, harmony and splendour, as are denied or charily doled out by life's reality ; to brace, restore, make happy, whole and clean, by granting their heart's desire to those who have borne the brunt of reality's shortcomings, and steadily looked into reality's impassive, enigmatic face ; this is the high, incomparable mission of the Muses, the lucidly inspired Sisters of him who is Sunlight and Prophecy, the great consoling Goddesses presiding over such perfection as Man, requiring it, recognizes as his own unreal handiwork. That handiwork is : Art, Music, Poetry, whether in the public and abiding works of specially gifted and traditionally trained men, or in

the hidden, evanescent day-dreams of all manner of loving persons, aware, however dimly, that the beloved *is* the beloved just because fashioned of their own soul's cravings. Nothing, not even the pursuit of truth, the glimpses (however partial) of reality by humble recognition of its nature—nothing is nobler, or more needed, than this consoling, fearless, conscious, creation of the harmony we need but find not ready-made. I even suspect that, alongside of its other sacred uses, art or poetry (call it as you please), has helped Man to recognize reality and seek its knowledge, teaching him to discriminate between what exists because he makes it for his pleasure, and those other things which exist (including his own self), apart from his wishes, by the mere necessity of their own nature and not his. Thus the statue he himself has fashioned is no longer an idol like the anointed stone ; the drama declaimed on a stage is not a counterfeit of real events ; the rhythm and rhyme of a sonnet show that this is not the real passion of real men and women ; Music, which fulfils man's craving for the voice of God or of Love, is evidently man's own or that of instruments constructed by himself. And perhaps as much as any philosophical speculations, the undeniable fact that the divine structure in whose soaring spaces and distributed lights and glooms man mends his bruised, bent, spirit, is but so much stone cut, piled and cemented by man's very hand—perhaps the temple or church, which broodingly fulfils his need for something kinder and greater than his own existence, has helped man to the recognition that the surrounding universe is not made for his desires and that the divinity he seeks is the divinity within himself.

Be this as it may, and whether or not art, by creating for the heart's desire, has taught respect towards reality outside and indifferent to, us ; this much is certain, that the nobility and innocence of art depends upon its straightforward standing aloof from assertions of what is true or untrue. This, therefore, is one item in the greatness of the Muses, the Consolers, the givers of what life often refuses but man's spirit often needs.

The Muses excepting of course Clio. And hence her hybrid, ambiguous and often unclean nature.

## III

Let no one imagine I am demanding an inordinate amount of truth from History. No human creature can have entire insight into the character and concatenations of any event, least of all past ones ; and everyone sees what he does see in the light or darkness of his prepossessions. It is natural that to one man certain happenings and personages should be attractive, to another repulsive. Carlyle's view of 1793 cannot be the same as Michelet's, though both may represent complementary aspects of the Revolution. Neither must you expect people who write history to restrain their natural eagerness to jump at conclusions and the human, all too human, tampering a tiny trifle with evidence. That happens in all scientific research, and all gets compensated, averaged out, into fairly correct notions on the student's part. Similarly, and as with other sorts of fact, you must not expect (or expecting will be disappointed) that seekers for historical truth should unconsciously or consciously reject the temptation of using their facts to point the moral or adorn the tale. All this is understood, and in so far, harmless. What Clio does (whence my dislike of her) is something else, and usually pure mischief.

I withdraw that statement, not *pure* mischief, not *always* mischief, but *often* mischief ; and always recklessness about mischief.

To the extent, neither more nor less, that Clio asserts herself to be a Muse and claims Muse's privilege (and duty) of employing counterfeit presentations for the satisfaction of our emotions, to that extent Clio is an artist, and therefore not a liar nor a pander. This (since the ugly word has come out), this pandering of so-called History to our dramatic instincts, often sanguinary ; to our insidious collective vanity and (what is quite harmless in comparison) to the snobbishness which makes simple persons delight in discussing the looks and habits of royalties and pry into the peccadilloes of illustrious men ; this pandering implies that we translate the past into terms of the present, else we should not sympathize, and thereby cheats us of History's fundamental lesson, which is that *nothing which happens is ever entirely alike*. Now it is

only such habitual recognition of change which allows real understanding of cause and effect, and allows thereby the just estimation of responsibility. Of course I do not mean that there are not all through the universe apparently stable laws, but these are generalizations which we deduce from recognition of similarity in difference and in alteration. Such abstractions are part of what I have called our recognition of *Otherness*; thereby an essential of true Altruism. For the "nothing new under the sun" is not a general principle extracted by comparison of single cases; but on the contrary, the indolent expectancy of repetition, the unimaginative inability of responding to what our faculties are not yet set for. It is the egotistic intrusion of our own motives into the motives of other folks and other times; indeed the dilettantish assumption that other folks and times, other anything, exist primarily to instruct or amuse *us*. And the expectancy of repetition, even where repetition exists, results not from observation but rather from the lack of it.

Being thus inertly prone to think in terms of sameness, the study of the Past might serve us as corrective to an intellectual and (since justice cannot exist apart from understanding) moral lack of activity whence we all suffer, and whereby we all make others suffer. For History could show us conditions differing from our own and from one another, and show the modifications (and their *modus operandi*) which connect those dissimilar conditions in a great chain of change. In other words, History, if treated as a science, would be *par excellence* the Science of Change, showing it us in stages more minute and complex than geology or biology. Instead of which, thanks to the Muse and her Votaries, the notion of Evolution has had to be introduced into History from geology and biology; and it is because of our recognition of the gradual transitions which have built up continents in epochs far out-spanning our imagination; it is because of the study of living and extinct animal species, and the concatenation of form in fossils and in embryos, that we are beginning to think of human institutions in terms of evolution, and to be interested in their varying and allied forms. Indeed it is one of Clio's unintended practical jokes that we are more able

and willing to do this in connexion with remote periods, whose sole records are broken potsherds and unpolished flints, than with the life-time of our grandfathers and grandmothers, whereof the verbal record is more accessible than what we leave (and hide) from week to week. For the Muse has no use for flints and potsherds. What *she* wants are human personages to gape at on a puppet show or ferret out in the places where we keep rags and dirty linen. The Muse caters for our various imaginative needs, noble or base, giving us the heroes and martyrs and villains for whom our sentimentality, megalomania, and morbid passions clamour ; personages great enough, abominable enough, pure enough, unhappy enough, to be the cherished companions, the hugged dolls, of our presumptuous day-dreams ; also mean enough, dirty enough in all their splendour of royalty or genius, to comfort our own meanness with the thought : "Well ! they also were human (which often means brutish), just like ourselves." Scaffolds and stakes, alcoves and backstairs ; she provides them with all the details which everyday life refuses, glory and filth to perfection ; and often, and alas, as in some of her greatest ministrants (I am thinking of the incomparable Michelet), all mingled in nauseous or piquant concoctions.

Nay, Clio caters for even humbler tastes ; for the same naïf pleasure experienced when, being children, we beheaded (or were beheaded, Elizabeth or Mary turn about) with fire-irons across footstools ; and to that intense satisfaction of indulging for honourable motives in dishonourable works, looking through key-holes, listening behind curtains, tampering with correspondence and generally behaving like blackguards with a perfect conscience ; the enjoyment which makes big and small children love detective stories ; the joy of having a hand in scandals like the Diamond Necklace or horrors like those of Gilles de Retz, yet remain decent ; to reincarnate retrospectively in Messalina, Marie Antoinette, the Merry Monarch, Napoleon, Ezzelino the Tyrant, or the Oxford Martyrs, while living unobtrusive, honourable lives in Chelsea, or at Wimbledon. What play-house has ever rivalled that of Clio, where, with the greatest convenience, we are both actor and audience !

All of which historical delectations depend largely on treating

the Past as if its personages belonged to our own day, our class, our visiting list ; for a man or woman of the Past as he or she really existed would often be as disagreeable to our feelings as would the methods of ablution of the Grand Monarque, let alone the forkless banquets of Homeric Kings poking eager fingers into the succulent thighs of freshly slaughtered beasts.

We want the Past, its romance and raciness. But a Past for our personal, present use. And Clio provides it.

#### IV

Should any reader object that all this is a slanderous view of History, my answer is: so much the better. I am not speaking of History as it (I like the nice impersonal neuter as opposed to my high-bosomed super-personal Muse!) may and should be ; as it, doubtless, already sometimes is, may even always have been from time to time. I am speaking of History in so far as symbolized by Clio. I am speaking of Clio. And no one believes more than I do that History is destined to become an ever finer thing ; and Clio to lose her footing in it, finally to vanish altogether, or turn, as other Goddesses have in their day, into some amusing little crone, Mother Hubbard or such like, for the delight of nurseries.

Which leads me to say that if there is a branch of human knowledge which cannot be learned by, and should never be taught to, children, except as just such an adjunct to *Grimm's goblins* or *Piglet Bland*, it is surely History. Children cannot understand the meaning of Change, the full sense of which is indeed a mark of intellectual and moral maturity to which we latter day grown-ups barely attain. Children have no sense of *otherness* ; the tiny world gathering around their little half-grown bodies and lovely heads whose every feature is still out of place—that childish world is all of “my-my” as it needs must be in creatures whose *I* has only just arrived ; who possess no real *mine* both in the Law’s eyes and as opposed to a real *thine*. History is or should be the study of Time working in human concerns ; and for Children Time is measured from getting up to going to bed ; at most by months bringing with them changes so great as well-nigh cancel previous memories.

To teach children History is to allow them, like those innocents of Victor Hugo's, to make hay of precious missals and scandalous documents in the Castle library. At best it is to let them play with a few cheap court cards, a splendid game. By all means use history to supplement other toys, educating the little creatures, all unconsciously, to colour, to movement, and to drama ; there is no better puppet show. Only let it be understood, if not by the children themselves, at least by the grown-ups, that it is a kind of Punch and Judy. But here Clio steps in, severe, sometimes even brandishing a pedagogic rod, lays pedantic hands on all these babes ; seats them on her hard key-pattered knee and administers, not without painful show of duty, the drams and syrups for which adults go to her. I doubt whether grown-up men and women would swallow patriotic lies so greedily had they not sucked them already at the age of barley sugar. Surely a grown-up man or woman, fairly educated and moderately experienced, might from time to time be struck by the queerness of its happening that just his or her own country (whichever it be) should be, not only *often*, but *always*, the supremely wise, good and glorious one among the lot. The oddness of this agreeable coincidence might even be brought home by noticing that the grown-ups of every other country are under the same impression, only about *their* country. Even a suspicion might arise in a few sceptical minds, that since there was evidently some muddle about each country being solely wise, good and glorious, it might well be that none was. But we have learned these views from our tenderest years, and they have taken on that warm, dim, comfortable, religious familiarity and rightness with which long habit invests everything, turning myth into dogma. Indeed in all countries nowadays History is taught with just this object in view, as a kind of religion, a help to docility, a training to *doing and dying without asking why* ; and incidentally a preparation for readiness to coerce or fleece our neighbours. I know, for instance, what has been taught in French schools since 1871, reversing Gambetta's advice, "*Pensons y toujours, n'en parlons jamais.*" But those teachings were merely applying to a different country the hatred long cultivated against *Perfidie Albion* which nearly provoked war about Marchand's

flag at Fashoda ; and, may, who knows ? some day be turned once more against the country which is to-day France's ally. That hatred of England would not have been so ready twenty years ago (was it M. Clemenceau who suggested rolling this perfidious nation in blood and mud ?) if small French children had not, like myself (for I was a small French child among successive incarnations), eaten their nursery meals off plates pictured with the story of Joan of Arc, appropriately explained in decorative scrolls. At all events those nursery plates (and all the books, lectures, monographs, plays, *cours de dictées*, *lectures patriotiques*, which succeeded them) made it immensely more difficult for, say, my own French cousins to grasp the fact (which they never have) that what was called *France* in the days of Joan and duly brought its portion of faggots to her burning, was a mediæval medley, Provençal, Burgundian, Angevin, English, which would never have recognized itself in the Third Republic ; that the English who, as Villon also recorded, burned her at Rouen, were not the English whom street boys there and elsewhere would playfully pursue with "*Angliche Goddam, vivent les Boers.*" Indeed that all that horrible business can be understood only in the light of witch trials and burnings of heretics, in fact only if you grasp the difference between our own time and the late Middle Ages. But such difference would enormously damp the interest, quench the passions which enliven our dull lives, even as poor Joan's and all other *autos da fé* enlivened the gaping, illiterate dullness of our forbears. Hence Clio never brings that difference forward. For her it is the name which makes the identity ; the name allowing us to stick pins into wax images (sometimes also realities) and roast them before a slow fire like Sister Helen. It was Clio who, in a street-song of the Tripoli War, called on the Italy of Giolitti and of Sonnino to buckle on the Helmet of Scipio Africanus . . . Let alone similar historical inducements even more recent.

At other moments when the Orchestra of Patriotism is in full swing, Clio obligingly hides away certain analogies ; that, for instance, between our present English attitude towards the Russian revolution and our interference with the Regicide Republic of Burke's *Reflections* and speeches.

Industrious artificer of faked nationalities as well as preserver of bygone enmities; parasite, sycophant, purveyor of drawingroom entertainments; agent of holy and unhallowed alliances; there are few jobs which Clio will not do or get done to oblige her clients. She will even, when absolutely required to, tell quite a lot of truth.

*Christmas, 1918.*

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**NOTES TO THE BALLET**

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## NOTES TO THE BALLET

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### . THE ORCHESTRA OF PATRIOTISM

#### I

Then according to you, Patriotism is not a virtue ?

No ; it may become habitual or it may be temporary, but it is always a combination of Impulses, Passions and more constant and elemental Habits : some of them usually virtuous, others always vicious ; and, like these Impulses, Passions and Habits of which it is made up, it should be accounted virtuous or vicious according as it promotes good or evil. In earlier days it may have promoted good, say that of saving Hellenic civilization from Persia and Carthage, or the commonwealths of Lombardy from Northern feudalism, or the French Revolution from Pitt and Coburg, or the British Constitution from the French Regicides (*vide* Burke), and Bonaparte's tidy tyranny ; though none of these things have been, or even perhaps can be, really demonstrated, and we don't know what the world may have missed through the victories of those patriotic Greeks, Lombards, French or English. What seems more probable is that, in less spasmodic ways than what boys are taught as the *Decisive Battles of the World*, it had the good effect of compacting languages and laws and sharpening the competition of useful varieties of civilization ; although, by the way, it also snuffed out a few : the patriotism of Rome snuffing out the patriotism, and also the competition and co-operation, of Carthage. Such debit and credit accounts are not accessible to mortal eyes, being (I fancy) kept under lock and key by Satan.

Even nowadays, no one except a German would suppose there could be a balance of good in *German* patriotism ; and a biologist vaunting the spirit of the herd has had to point out that German patriotism is that of wolves, whereas English (and presumably Allied) patriotism is that of the busy, over-worked but meritorious bee, devoted to its drones and queens.

So let the various belligerents, and the ghosts of past belligerents—now enemies, then allies or *vice versa*, Nelson and Wellington and Blücher and Hoche and Bonaparte, settle these difficult matters each to their own intimate satisfaction. I mean *when* and *why* patriotism was quite undoubtedly an unmixed blessing or a blessing at all.

My contribution to the subject is different ; consisting chiefly in the recognition that, while its component human Impulses, Habits and Passions, can be compared to performers whose range and timbre and place in the scale and (like the fiddle tribe) whose affinities and even their respective delightful or distressing quality to human ears are ascertained and fairly uniform each in its kind, Patriotism itself is, as I have told Satan to say, an *orchestra* wherein they all play either successive and variously important and mutually compensating parts, or oftenest extraordinarily fused *tutti*, sounding to the inexpert ear like one vast instrument quite *sui generis*, divinely, mysteriously stimulating in one's own camp, sickeningly, terrifying or ludicrous when heard from the Enemy's quarters.

Now this recognition on my part, that Patriotism is not one of the passions but a combination of many or most, is full of interesting detail corollaries to the moralist ; and since I have mentioned that ubiquitous person, himself so very useful to the Orchestra in question, let me despatch the moral aspect of the question before passing to others.

One of the differences between the Orchestra and the players is that, whereas the Impulses, Passions, Habits and their simpler combinations, as exemplified in parenthood, sex-relations and the ways of *Homo Economicus*, reside in the separate individuals or smallest combinations of individuals (parent and child, lover and beloved, buyer and seller, etc.), and are therefore easily checked by the other individuals and their habits and passions, the combination called Patriotism resides in the collectivity and is therefore withdrawn from the criticism and the counteraction which are necessary to keep Impulses, Habits and Passions, I will not say virtuous, but tolerably innocuous. For instance, Heroism has to sit side by side with Widow Fear ; Idealism is made to play wonderful passages by thirds with the Harmonium of Self-

Righteousness ; and I have tried to show what happens to Pity and Indignation when beckoned by Satan out of their high seats in the auditorium and accepting a place in that Orchestra.

So much for the moralist. I mean this is the warning he might reasonably deduce from my discovery that *Patriotism* is not a Passion, but a combination of all the Passions. And now, leaving moralists and moral warnings alone, let us pass on to some more abstract deductions from that, as I consider, indisputable but hitherto neglected fact.

I will begin by reminding you that, as is universally admitted, compounds are less stable and more variable than their components, and may even occasionally undergo transformation into something wholly different in character, or cease altogether to exist, their elements seeking other combinations ; a generalization true not only in the material universe of chemistry or physics but also in the inner domain of the spirit, memory and biological memory (what Semon calls the *Mnemic principle*), reproducing simple combinations (such as the intervals of which every piece of music is composed) more easily than the varying larger combinations, say a symphony, in which they have occurred ; and as regards hereditary possibilities, aptitude for retaining words being ready made in the infant, but not, despite such centuries of repetition, the knowledge of any language or part of a language. Consonantly with this, the examination of Patriotism will show that, as befits a highly complex combination, it differs very much according to which of its possible constituent passions are called into activity by given circumstances, so that it is liable to various transformations. It is originally exclusively consanguineous or tribal ; racial as with the Hebrews, theocratic and indifferent to place or race as with the Mohammedans ; concentrated on to smallest localities and narrowest local traditions and interests as in early Greece and mediæval Italy ; or dependent solely upon community of language and institutions in modern nations, the German-speaking Alsatian of Erckmann-Chatrian's Napoleonic stories identifying himself with the France of the Revolution, and speaking of French civilization (even of the monuments of Paris) as the work of

his forefathers (*nos anciens*), forgetful of the fact that *his* forefathers were not French at all, but as purely German as the Würtembergers and Bavarians then (1814) desecrating his "*Patrie*" ; forgetting also that the language which he spoke with his mother and wife was not French at all, but German.

Now these transformations of the object of patriotism suggest that this composite passion may undergo further transformations in the near future. The part played by geographical segregation has already dwindled ; the part played by racial continuity is a purely mythical one, and has probably never been anything much more ; the part played by languages is very real and may increase with unified education ; the part played by institutions will probably diminish with the spread of self-government ; the part played by religion has long ceased in countries containing many sects like England or America. And the segregating power of class may, very likely, produce a new collective allegiance, a new loyalty, in the immediate future. The Orchestra will no longer be inscribed *Patriotism* ; but the same Passions will sit and play within its segregating barriers.

For the second essential characteristic of Patriotism is that, while being a combination, an Orchestra of various and usually conflicting Passions, it depends upon *segregation*, not to say antagonism ; upon a *railing*, upon something separating those who feel it from everyone else. The self-conscious, the passionate collectivity, whether it be Clan or Tribe among primitive mankind, a City as in Classical Antiquity, a Religion as in the Middle Ages, a *Country* or *Nation* as in modern times, or *Class* as may well be in the near future, this collectivity requires for its self-consciousness and passion to be an extension of the individual self : it requires therefore a barrier, only less perfect and less permanent, which, like the individual's impenetrable body and never really communicable soul, prevents its thoughts and feelings from being identified with those outside those barriers of *otherness*. Patriotism, in short, and whatever has stood in its stead and will stand in its stead, as a collective though compound passion, requires for its existence segregation, opposition, antagonism, and I venture to add : hostility. Now such segregation may result in more

good than harm for the majority of individuals present and future ; it may likewise result in more harm than good. If a virtue can be distinguished from a vice (" *and of this virtue I will make a vice*," says Satan) by the balance of good over mischief which it produces under given circumstances, then Patriotism can be considered virtuous or vicious only according to circumstances ; and hence cannot be called virtuous or vicious taken in itself and, so to speak, in its own right.

My metaphorical description of it as an *Orchestra* has the advantage of affording us another, though subsidiary, test of Patriotism's very varying, moral value. That test is the varying part played by its components. There is so much muddled thinking on these subjects, particularly in war-time, that I feel obliged to insult my more intelligent reader for the benefit of his weaker brethren, by clearing away any notion that these components are the various Nations, and that while the patriotism of Germans is wolfish and wicked, the patriotism of Britons (as Mr. Trotter tells us) is that of loyal, useful, though somewhat unintelligent bees, rather too over-worked for the benefit of their hereditary magnates. I am moreover not speaking of Patriotism such as it manifests itself in any particular country, but of Patriotism such as it exists in the abstract and in all countries equally ; and the components of this *Orchestra* I am speaking of are the different human impulses, habits and passions which always, though maybe in varying proportions, enter into its composition.

And having guarded against the attempt (so natural in war-time) to call one's own nation's Patriotism virtuous and the other nation's Patriotism wicked, I may as well point out that one of the characteristics of *all* Patriotism as such is that, just as every Religion calls every other Religion a superstition or a heresy, the Patriotism of every belligerent nation tends to call that of its opponents by a less flattering name : long before Mr. Trotter had compared Germany to a wolf-pack, Burke had called Republican France a Band of Assassins, and a college for the training of atheists and madmen. I am glad to have been obliged to this little digression, for if you bear its occasion in mind (namely the distinction between *our* good Patriotism and the enemy's wicked Patriotism), it may make

it easier to recognize the abstract and essential nature of that famous Orchestra, and of the players who invariably go to make it up.

## II

Let us now consider those various players and the varying parts they are sure to play in patriotism's great symphonies with *concerting parts obbligati*, that is solos, trios, and so forth ; its wonderful counterpoints where the same theme introduced in the shrill notes of Fear will be repeated in the mellow, tender tones of loyalty to our dead, or the husky gravity of elderly fortitude : above all Patriotism's matchless blending of all the different *timbres* and registers in a *tutti* which amounts in itself to a miraculous new instrument.

That Patriotism should so rarely emerge except in the presence of an enemy real or imagined, of a threat or a challenge, leads to the recognition that there must be in its composition more of Fear and Hate than of Love. At least we would none of us give much for a Love which needed Fear or Hate to awaken or keep it alive ; it would be love born of Jealousy. Howsoever that last point may be, Love there necessarily must be in all Patriotism, for is not *Patriotism* treated as synonymous with *Love of one's country* ?

So, before inquiring into the part played by viler passions, let us inquire into the nature of this Love which is so conspicuous a portion of Patriotism as to lead some people to imagine that it is the whole. The nature of this Love : I might almost have said, its *grammatical status*. For grammar, being the track worn by mankind's use of words, not only canalizes our thought and often prevents its spreading to fertilize new fields, but reveals by its very channels of usage the direction which the drops and trickles and streams of our thoughts have taken in the past, and what have been the places of their confluence and of their rapid passionate pressure. Now the love entering into Patriotism, and called by Patriotism's name, is a love which is governed by the *first personal pronoun* ; and manifests itself in the *possessive case*. It is love due to possession ; not love . . . how shall we distinguish it ? (though my Satan by the way has done so !) by *preference*,

attraction, suitability, choice, desire: not *love simply as love*.

An undeservedly forgotten Italian poet, Metastasio, perhaps paraphrasing some even obscurer classic, has left a brief and moving summary of patriotic love. It is Themistocles answering Xerxes' inquiry, "What can make him love so greatly the city which has exiled him?" For Themistocles had previously refused the Great King's offer with the mere statement: "*Nacqui in Atene—I was born in Athens.*"

"*E che tanto 'ami in lei—and what is it thou lovest so much in her?*" rejoins Xerxes. Whereupon Themistocles:

"Everything, O King. The ashes of my fathers, the sacred Laws, the tutelary gods. The language and the manners; the sweat it has cost me; the glory it once gave me; the air and earth, the walls, the very stones."

("*Tutto, O signor; le ceneri degli avi, le sacri leggi, i tutelari numi; la favella, i costumi; il sudor che mi costa; lo splendor che ne trassi: l'aria, il terren, le mura, i sassi.*")

The whole evokes a vague and lovely vision of antique life which, even as I repeat it to myself and write it down, makes my own heart beat with the particular little rhythm associated with the name *Athens*. And each item is, or may be, extremely attaching in itself. An ancestral grave—(we see the little garlanded Chapel of the local *hero*), a language and manners and customs (the language too, of Greece, the manners and customs we know from Plato and the oration of Pericles !) what can be more so? And then that lie of the stony olive-growing land; the Southern sky, the atmosphere bright and full of the scent of sun-dried Mediterranean herbs; and then again the Gods; there never were such Gods as those we know from Homer and Pindar and Greek marbles. I have chosen this example, and enlarged a little upon the images which accompany that little throb of my own heart at the word "*Athens*"; because I want to draw attention to the fact that they are objects of *my* love as well as of that antique patriot's; a fact which Metastasio, or rather the usage of the courteous Italian language (which says "*the father*," "*the house*" or "*the garden*," without the reiteration of *my* or *your*), has left quite uncomplicated with grammatical indications that any

of these things were more the property of Themistocles than yours or mine. Now suppose we leave it at that : recognize the loveliness of all these details and of their combination called *Athens* ; and the love we most of us do, or could, feel for them : suppose we place Themistocles among ourselves as such lovers of all that *Athens* means ; leaving it doubtful whether the graves, ancestors, manners and language, Gods, atmosphere, stocks and stones and landscapes belong to someone else, to the country where someone else (no matter who) happened to be born ; follow up the suggestion that, like you or me, Themistocles is contemplating Athens and Athenian things with intense love and veneration, but as one contemplates what never has or could have belonged to oneself, without any implication of *mine or thine*. Should we then be in presence of Patriotism ? Should we be listening to the outburst of a patriot ? Evidently not. If the Great King had pointed to some equally delightful and venerable country, say in his own domains, Sardis or Ephesus, would Themistocles have answered, as we might answer someone who pitted Browning's English "laneside aflutter with poppies" against his "castle, precipice-encurled in a gash of the wind-swept Apennine," "well both are delightful and I don't know which I care for most." No, Themistocles has answered beforehand in that—"I was born in Athens." It is *that* which makes him love those Athenian things which he enumerates ; makes him prefer them to the similar things or equivalent ones (including plenty of future *sudore e splendore* offered by Xerxes) of some country of which he happened *not* to be a native. The previous answer "I was born in Athens" explains the difference between your or my love of Athens, of Italy, of any "woman-country wooed not won," and *his* love, which is the *patriot's* love. It shows the difference of attitude between one who merely enjoys or appreciates or venerates, and one who *owns* ; it reinstates the possessive pronoun omitted in Metastasio's enumeration ; it shows that Themistocles loves Athens and Athenian things because he regards them as *his*.

It seems, therefore, that patriotic love is not due merely to the intrinsic qualities recognized in the object of that love, but also, and in so far as it differs from the love felt by an

alien, upon the attitude of ownership or part ownership, upon the presence of the possessive pronoun. That attitude is one of those most constant in all human affairs, so constant that we are apt to overlook it, as we overlook our own respiration or our balancing over a centre of gravity. And the possessive pronoun or possessive flexion, that humble part of speech which literary experts find so much less interesting than nouns, verbs and adjectives, is perhaps the most important, if not of grammatical, at least of affective, of human, categories. Its classifications into *mine* and *thine* represents the vastest of all emotional and active, hence of ethical, distinctions. Its presence, the bare fact of our thinking, at any moment, in terms of possession, possession positively by self, negatively by others, instead of thinking in terms of existence (of things *being so and so*), means that we are no longer or not yet in the realm of contemplation and appreciation, of reason, analysis and causality; but in that of passion and action, desire and effort: not of *seeing* but of *taking*, *grabbing*, *clinging to*, *keeping*, *defending*; and, in the course of such taking or keeping, frequently *destroying*.

“A country right or wrong.” Whoever said such an absurdity? But substitute the one word *my* and the saying becomes not only legitimate but meritorious and beyond the reach of criticism. Neither, of course, must anyone dare to criticize *my* country: for right or wrong, reasonably or unreasonably criticized it is *mine*; and when I say *mine* I say *hands off!* For round that little word *mine* there watch the most valiant guards, the most vigilant sentinels of the most wretched but most august of Entities: the Human Self.

Our conscious life is such that we require not merely a modicum of food, warmth, breathable air and standing-room, but a modicum of self-importance, without which we are trampled, starved, asphyxiated. That is part of our innermost inviolable life. And everything gathered around that sacred core grows to be part of it: a knock upon the thing we are grasping shakes the grasping hand: the sun’s heat passes from our garments to our skin: the praise of our belongings is felt as praise of ourself. And every criticism of whatever I call *mine* is a diminution of my sacred self. Do we willingly

tell a man that his horse is broken-winded, his house damp, his coat greasy, his hair unbrushed, his hearing defective, his child deficient or his wife unfaithful or undesirable? Such statements of facts are always a liberty taken, often an inexpiable offence, sometimes an insult calling for blows or a duel. And when the criticized belongings are what is called *my country* . . . well then, if we are patriots, we answer "my country right or wrong." And "national honour" is expressly excluded from the subjects of international arbitration.

Conversely, a child is taught that Elisha sent bears to devour the little boys who called attention to his baldness; he learns from experience that it is good policy to remark upon the beauty and value of his elders' possessions or supposed possessions. What is odder still is that it is not yet deemed impolite to suggest, even in the naif manner of one's French friends, that though a poor alien was not born of one's own nation, he really deserved that honour and might almost claim it. All this is absolutely natural and on the whole doubtless for the best. I mean it is natural that people should feel a certain special interest, warmth, familiarity, a quite supreme intimacy and importance in and with whatever had become identified with themselves by possession; and all for the best that they should prefer what is theirs to what is not. It would be intolerable if all parents wanted to rear other children than their own; frightful if all husbands preferred other men's wives; most disturbing even if whole populations, as occurred in barbaric times and still occurs at the expense of what colonials call "natives" or "savages," took it into their heads to prefer other folk's countries to the one they were born in. Egoism, whatever we may say to the contrary, is the first rule in life; and altruism, collective or otherwise, is its corrective, its purifying, ennobling, transforming agency, but cannot do without it. Neither do I suggest that life could be carried on one fraction of a second by mere contemplation, reason, etc., or by anything save an irresistible, unfailing, unceasing push and pull of passion, habit, and what people call (rather mistakenly) *instinct*. Indeed the truth of this is demonstrated by their always having the upper hand; and contemplation, reason, etc., rarely having a chance against them. Just

therefore, natural selection or providence has usually provided rather too much of the unreasonable faculties and too little of the reasoning ones. And it so happens that there is an objection to the unchecked dominion of the sacred sense of self and of the venerable and comfortable feeling of possession: and that is that there are *other selves* and *other selves'* belongings. The other fellow, man or thing happens to be there, hence requires to be taken into account. The rest of the universe also happens to be there and moreover quite colossally *more there* and *everywhere* than just you or I or we. And we can settle the quite exorbitant claims of this inexorable Rest of the Universe, this *Otherness*, only by occasionally slackening down our necessary natural self-preference, by interrupting awhile the inter-play of our various passions and instincts, and taking an interest in *otherness* for its own sake; contemplating it, appreciating it, and even, as we *love* countries which are not ours because we recognize their lovable qualities, taking to *love* where there can be no question of *mine* or *thine*, but merely of the suitability of its lovable ness to our capacity for love.

But that, as I have tried to show by the example of Themistocles, is *not* patriotic love. Patriotic love is love for one's country *because it is one's own*; and so far it is of the same sort as the feeling which impels all of us to linger over the good points of our own children, horses, house, garden, library, greenhouse and garage (if we have one), and naively take for granted that their complete and detailed appreciation must be a source of equal spiritual *bien être* to our visitors.

Such love due to possession does justice neither to the real qualities of its object (since it fills up their gaps and makes them almost unnecessary), nor to the qualities of all the other things in creation. Hence although undoubtedly the most prevailing, therefore, perhaps, the most needful, kind of love, it is not the highest. And if you ask me what I mean by *highest* in such a reference, I mean the kind which is required to correct, to check, to transform, in short to see to its not becoming a mere pest, such being, it seems to me, the only reasonable meaning in any kind of hierarchy, and especially the only one in the hierarchic order of any ethical valuation. It is for lack of a higher (in this sense) regulator that the

Orchestra of Patriotism (or of, any collective self-preference which has preceded or may succeed it) has come to admit such very disreputable members, to show such unexpected cheek-by-jowlness; and finally, to be, as I have shown, the property of Satan and occasionally under the conductorship of Ballet Master Death.

### III

"The gist of all your remarks about patriotism," I can hear my Reader answering, "is that *you* have none."

Exactly so. Indeed my not having any myself is, very likely, what allows my seeing what Patriotism really is. For it is with Patriotism as with all other things which we possess, and possessing, enjoy, as we are apt to enjoy even our own defects and maladies when they lead to talking of ourselves and feeling for ourselves; as we tend to prefer *our* family, *our* horse, dog, or the view from *our* backyard, regarding them with an especial complacency, as objects of possible pride, often with the acquiescent familiarity of habit, always with the warm intensity of all pertaining to self. I know that friendly feeling towards one's belongings, bodily or spiritual, for I notice it in myself about so many things of which, as you remark, Patriotism happens not to be one. I accept, I proclaim from the housetops this providential arrangement which makes us kind to everything constituting our thought of self. All I contend is that this attitude is not always favourable to knowledge of, or correct estimation, of realities.

No, I have no Patriotism; since it is not Patriotism to feel love and admiration (and also occasional shame) for several countries besides the one which taxes one's income or gives (or at present usually refuses) one's passport. I have no Patriotism, and might have added, am just as happy without it; but even as the Inquisition or the Church Elders used certain arguments for demonstrating that one cannot be happy outside the True Belief, so also the war has shown me that there are moments in the World's history, when one is really not altogether comfortable without some little Patriotism.

But though I have no Patriotism, I have sundry feelings or preferences which are often confused with it; which occasion-

ally grow up in its shelter and are also occasionally starved and stunted by its shade. For instance, *public-spiritedness*; by which I mean a wish to make things better for the unknown majority of people, and a repugnance to gaining or keeping advantages at their expense; not perhaps love of one's neighbour, since one loves only the neighbour one feels to be lovable, but respect for one's neighbour's welfare, one's neighbour's chance of happiness, which is quite different from wishing to marry, live with, converse with, or even see that neighbour in his or her individual embodiment. And as a consequence, a preference for certain things, liberty of the subject, equality of opportunities, free speech, free trade, free thought, administrative probity, political internationalism, which seem to increase such chances of happiness for mankind at large. I call this *public-spiritedness*; and have, or wish I had it. It is what Patriotism transforms itself into more and more in times of peace, losing its teeth, claws and bark; it is what Patriotism may eventually evolve into for good and all, leaving those animal weapons behind, as mankind discarded the clutching jaws and grasping feet and balancing tail of apes, and acquired a human thumb and a human brain. Public-spiritedness implies a willingness to forgo certain advantages for the sake, for the bare thought, of certain other ones, the fruitful barter of one's wish for gain or ease or eminence against one's wish that the world at large, or the mews to the back, should be a less depressing object of contemplation. Such public-spiritedness unites the individual in effort and in thought with the multitude. And, since it is easier to feel for what we see, and to see what lies closest at hand, such public-spiritedness naturally begins at home. And since our home is often set against another home; one town, country, class against another, even public-spiritedness is apt to lose its temper, to be blinded by prejudice, seek advantages at others' expense; suspect others of like seekings; roll itself up like hedgehogs into a mass of bristles or squirt out inky poison like the cuttlefish of journalism.; in fact public-spiritedness tends to be ousted by *Patriotism*. Indeed, long before this war, I was impressed by the fact that in countries where, as in France and Italy, the patriotic habit, the bristling and spouting against

other countries, happened (for some historical cause) to be much to the fore, there was a lack of public-spiritedness as such, a blinking of administrative muddle, an acquiescence in political corruption, and that habit, as Italians say, of "one hand washing the other hand"; in fact I noticed that, in proportion as men feel violently against other men, good or bad, beyond their frontiers, they accepted their own evil-doers in a fraternal spirit. And the Patriotism of all the belligerent nations, with its Coalitions, Unions Sacrées, not merely of mutually exclusive principles and parties, but of scoundrels with honourable persons, of maniacs with wise men, has reinforced the same lesson; to wit: that however different things may have been in a Past which I do not know, Patriotism, under the present conditions which I see, absorbs the combativeness and endurance and self-renunciation needed for putting one's own house in decent order; and spends it in devastating the house on the other side of the road, with the result that, just as this war-expenditure on shells and guns and khaki must result in a lack of food and rolling-stock and clothes and schools, so also both this house and the other house will be left in an excessively ruinous and disorderly condition.

And let this be my answer to the initial question: Do you think that Patriotism is or is not a virtue? namely: *not in our modern times*; because, besides destroying men and wealth and sympathy and common sense and desire for truthfulness, it also puts itself in the place and absorbs the much-needed resources of public-spiritedness. Has not this war whittled down "national service" to mean whatever helps to carry on war, turning schoolmasters and men of science into soldiers killing and killed by other schoolmasters and men of science?

And one reason why I am pleased with my discovery that Patriotism is not a human passion but an Orchestra of Human Passions, is that it helps to show how in that Orchestra the noblest, rarest human impulses are sat upon and polluted by Fear, Hatred, Hypocrisy and all the vile crew which waste the collective, as they waste the individual, soul.

*August, 1918.*

## WIDOW FEAR

## I

In real life Widow Fear, as often as not, goes by the name of Dowager Lady Prudence, or, as moderns pronounce it, *Preparedness*; and, so far from keeping a rag-and-bottle shop, she is to be found in the company of grave and reverend seniors, or persons expected to be such. Like so much dealt with, or evaded, by the Moralist, her case is one like that of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde.

In a pamphlet, which will, I hope, be reprinted among his philosophical *obiter dicta*, Mr. Bertrand Russell has shown that modern war, especially this particular war, is the Offspring of Fear. *Si vis pacem, para bellum* has, nine times out of ten, the meaning of *make war to stave off war*; or at all events make arrangements for staving off war, competitive armaments and alliances which war inevitably results from. Statesmen prudently insisting on Preparedness, imprudently overlook that it calls forth Preparedness on the other side; and that the two Preparednesses collide, till both parties find themselves at war; and, in immeasurable, honest (or well-feigned) surprise, accuse the other party of breaking the peace, thus elaborately and expensively safeguarded.

If we could set Clio (who stands godmother to so many of Widow Fear's children) to useful work with any likelihood of getting her to do it, I should propose a historical study of reciprocal preparedness and its effects, let us say, since Louis XIV.

## II

Widow Fear, when ostensibly sober after one of her bad bouts of delirium tremens, is much addicted to retrospective prophecy. I mean to pretending that what has happened as a result of war, is that war's justification. I see that *Vorwaerts* is at this moment saying that the treatment of Germany since the Armistice shows how right the German Majority Socialists were in voting the war credits; they knew what to expect in case of defeat, and therefore joined with their hated Imperialist

rulers in strengthening the defensive. To this the Allied Socialists might, and doubtless do, retort, that if their German comrades had not voted the credits, there would have been no war, in which the Germans roused the vindictiveness of their adversaries. Each party holds that what it did, does, or (as is at present the case with the French) proposes to do, is justified by what the other party has or would have done ; each overlooking that if the other had not been given an opportunity by the war itself, none of the things could or would have happened at all. The German abominations in France and Belgium are used to show how right the Entente was to crusade against a people capable thereof ; the present starving and ruining and (behaving as if her surrender had not been conditional) tricking of Germany by the Entente is used to show how wise Germany was in trying to break the iron circle of foes bent on her destruction. Thus what has happened in consequence of being at war is used to justify the war itself. In one sense, it has been not the justification, but an efficient cause of the War. For—and here we are back at Widow Fear—a chief cause of the War was the belief by either side that the other would act as it has done, or attempted to do ; a belief perhaps not uninfluenced by a vague previous realization of what, if we were not (each set of us) such pacific and humanitarian angels, *we* should have liked to do, had the right, one may add, remembering the French minister's naïf “has the victor no right over the vanquished ?” to do ; even if we magnanimously refrain from using that right.

Psychology allows one to guess that there is indeed, in some of Widow Fear's doings when she is Lady Prudence, something more even than the expectancy of how the adversary's blow would feel : there is, no doubt, a kind of muscular prescience (*preparedness* in the psychological sense !) of the blow one would give that adversary, could give him if, as people say, provoked. Such is the obscure underlying state of men's nerves ; it throws up into the lucid consciousness, not indeed a faithful mirroring of these incipient movements, but a logical, a verbal argument, which takes for its gratuitous starting-point one of the incidents of the circle of action and reaction constituting the quarrel. War logic argues in such a

circle, each party moving backwards or forwards from a point it selects, e.g., the adversary's potential, or only subsequently actual, misdeeds. I do not doubt that behind the familiar stunts "there are worse things than war," "there are things to ward off which war is a measure of prudence," or "war is better than slavery," there is a massive emotional anticipation, call it by its real name, a *panic-fear* of the very things: invasion, defeat, crushing, devastation, starving, dismembering, humbling, which one nation can and occasionally does inflict on its adversary; which every nation attempts, with various shades of cynicism and sanctimoniousness, to do as its part of the war; but to none of which it would be exposed unless it went into the war. It is upon this emotional rehearsing of the dangers and horrors of war that we found the arguments justifying our participation: in our feelings the dangers and horrors have already taken place; and we take part in the war forgetting that in modern times, where whole nations pay in life and money, it is only by thus taking part that we expose ourselves to invasion and its evils. Small buffer-states like Belgium can indeed, alas, be subjected to the worst of war's horrors without any such choice. But on the other hand, it never is a small buffer-state who chooses to participate in war, or requires to justify its participation. The only states who have cause to be afraid of war are those requiring none of the arguments and cart-before-the-horse hallucinations of Widow Fear. And as a matter of fact it is not such small states as Belgium, or it might have been Switzerland or Holland, who say that "there are worse things than war," and that "war is a measure of prudence." They keep out of war until war comes in to them. It is the large countries who say they could not have kept out, and say it because they could have kept out but chose to come in. So that the case of Belgium by no means invalidates Mr. Russell's dictum that "war is the offspring of fear": only for poor Belgium, it was *other* countries' fear: Germany's fear of strangle-hold "encirclement," France's fear of invasion, Britain's fear of "being left without a single friend" (in other words "the Channel ports in *other* than allied hands"); it was the fear of all these great countries which resulted in poor little Belgium actually

suffering in its person worse things than they had feared for themselves, and tried to ward off by "coming in."

### III

And before leaving Widow Fear, or her reputable Dr. Jekyll, the Dowager Preparedness, I should like to add, that just as economists have shown that insurance against risks swells the price of commodities to those who buy them ; so it might be well if moralists and politicians pointed out how much time, labour and material and life, all so much needed in other places, are spent, shall we say ? in locks and locking up, often of possessions which, like Epictetus' iron lamp, might almost be left for the house breaker, and profitably replaced by one of earthenware, whereof Christ's words come true—that rust does not get at it.

It is a curious paradox, at the present moment exemplified by France's obstinacy against a League of Disarmament and in favour of territorial guarantees, that courage of the warlike kind, by no means helps to expel Fear ; but on the contrary, allows the most wasteful and perilous of human passions to keep up her double existence in Council Chambers of great nations and in the rag-and-bottle shops of journalism.

At this moment Europe is called upon to take the risk of disarming. Will it have the courage to take it ? After all, it must have needed some courage to exchange the first commodities, the first amber against the first bronze, instead of clubbing one's potential customers. It must have needed some courage to leave off blunderbusses and a rout of armed lackeys when going to the play and trust one's life to a few policemen and a street lamp. And it is the practical mischief of Widow Fear that . . . Well ! not merely that she deprives you of the courage needed to run certain profitable risks, but actually uses up the abundant latent courage of mankind in making men perpetually frightened of one another. So out with the sluttish hag ! and *si vis pacem, pacem para.*

March, 1919.

## THE SILVER TRUMPET OF IDEALISM

## I

There are cynics who aver (and present events will not diminish this cynicism) that the *Silver Trumpet of Idealism* is not really of silver at all, but only of *papier-maché*; indeed that in our highly educated age it is a by-product of the printing and publishing trade.

But I am speaking of the genuine instrument of noble metal, even if somewhat hardened with alloys.

## II

"Ideals," writes a man in the *Nation*, "do not justify the abattoir of Europe; an Ideal would scorn existence on such terms." Yet in the self-same number another man writes that much as he abhors war (for we all abhor war!) a seven years war would not be too high a price for the realization of Mazzini's *Delenda est Austria*. . . .

Some of my pacifist friends would answer, judicious and unperturbed, that this, and everything conducive to the prolongation of such an *abattoir*, is a *false* Ideal; or else an Ideal falsely, mistakenly applied. . . . The same is, or was, said of the horrors of religious wars and persecution: Torquemada, Bloody Mary, etc. All that was *false* religion; or religion falsely interpreted. The contention being that a religion, and nowadays an ideal (which is its secularized version) *can do* no wrong; whence, if wrong is done, or what you and I happen to consider wrong, why what has done it can't be *real* religion; it must be a sham Ideal.

We require to go deeper than such a convenient self-justificatory twaddle. A religion is a religion, an Ideal is an Ideal, not in virtue of its good results, but in virtue of its constituting a particular assemblage of qualities, to which we give that name; just as a man is a man, or a horse a horse, not because we approve of his conduct or its paces, but because *man* and *horse* are names referring to a group of peculiarities which do not necessarily include what you and I call *good*; so that if you want to assert or deny the desirability of either you must say a

good man or a *bad* man, a good horse or a *bad* horse, not just *man or horse*. But *Religion* and, *Ideal* are treated by those who deal in them as if they were words like *sustenance and poison*, implying a quality of being good or bad for those who take it, in which case we should have to admit that just as all sustenance is sustaining, and all poison poisonous, all religions must be true, all Ideals desirable, not merely the religions and Ideals we happen to approve of.

An Ideal can be recognized not by the goodness or badness of its results, but (just like its older representative, religious doctrine) by the *manner in which it is held*, by its cause and concomitants in the mind or the society holding by it. An Ideal is held as imperative and binding, that essential attitude being taken over from its religious origin ; while its rationalistic fostering reveals itself in the supposition (not always justified) that although imperative and best not argued about, once you have got it (for Ideals do not, like religions, say in old-fashioned parental phrase: "How dare you argue with your creator ?") can yet be shown, with a little trouble, to have been got by an act of free investigating reason. That is the attitude Ideals take up *vis-à-vis* of religions. But even like Protestantism when no longer obliged to differentiate itself from Popery, Ideals, when left to themselves, have a way of falling back upon an intuitive and inevitable recognition of whatever is good, noble, etc. And this is an Ideal's true characteristic : it is an aim, often a vague aim, which we recognize for an Ideal by the feelings accompanying it ; in fact by the manner wherein it is held. An Ideal is never held for interested motives ; it ceases to be an Ideal in proportion as its objects embody anything which also suits our convenience or our self-interest. It takes an Italian prime minister, born of the race of Machiavelli and of the seventeenth century Conceit-Mongers, to come by such a paradox as "*Sacro Egoismo*."

Indeed an Ideal, like a duty (but with a free, spontaneous burst, a self-imposed and uplifting imperative) is precisely what puts aside and silences convenience and self-interest, both of which can look after themselves without its magnificent but sometimes tiresome trumpeting. An Ideal implies the

willing oblation of that which, however dear to us, is yet less dear than this sense of freedom and uplifting and dignity given us by an ideal. In fact, an Ideal, like the other spiritual entities we talk about, like *art*, *civilization*, *religion*, is a group of activities of our own, a special definable response to certain outer circumstances, a state of mind and a readiness for action of a particular type. Under the sway of an Ideal, a man acts, feels, even *looks* in a recognizable way, other than how a man does under the dominion of say, a sense of duty, a recognition of practical advantage, or a desire for pleasure. I have emphasized the word *looks*, because this appearance is the outward sign of an inner and spiritual, i.e., an unconscious, nervous, muscular, cardiac, visceral, state. You will find in old-fashioned books on physiognomy the description of the "enthusiast," the man with an Ideal, usually a religious one. But while religious feeling may often produce mere admiring resignation and acquiescence, an "Ideal" nearly always implies a fervid willingness to sacrifice, or at least override, somebody else. Ideals, whether religious or secular, are combative; they imply that something is as it shouldn't be, and that you are conducting (or would conduct, if you could) to set it right. *Set it right.* An Ideal, also, involves that the holder thereof considers it *right*; just as a religion implies for the believer that its creed is *true*. Hence, just as religion gives a sense of certainty, highly conducive to inner peace, indeed so highly prized that religion is often adopted for its sake; so also an Ideal gives a persuasive sense that however wrong the world may be (indeed, ideals imply a degree of wrongness, else why have them?), the world *can be set right*, and what is more, can be set right in greater or less degree by *your* adherence to them, *your* fervour for them, *your* readiness to take action, to upset something or somebody, *your* joyous willingness to sacrifice yourself and others for that ideal's actuation. Just as it is the essential and overwhelming certainty of possessing the truth which makes it so easy for religious belief to be erroneous; so also it is the essential and overwhelming sense of aiming at good, of increasing the good in the universe, this conviction of being a lieutenant of howsoever abstract a Power Making for Betterment, which surrounds

Idealism with pitfalls of wrong-doing. It is his unhesitating willingness to sacrifice himself, and therefore somebody else which makes the Idealist a possible, a frequent, Tool of the Devil.

May, 1918.

### III

What would become of the world without Ideals and Idealists? Well! If the foregoing analysis is at all correct, the world will never be without them, any more than without generosity or cautiousness, without impulsive persons or phlegmatic ones; they are all natural varieties. The question is rather: given their existence, how could they be made to further the world's happiness rather than jeopardize it? The war, which suggested this question to my mind, has answered it as follows: by making Idealists less spectacular and decorative; and Ideals less gimcrack and gaudy; more akin, these latter, to the manly, homespun, wearable things called *standards* and *obligations*.

If people were less idle and less overworked, they would, as I shall go on to suggest, hanker rather less after adventure; at all events adventure would arise out of the day's work or day's play. Similarly, if people were more decent, more accustomed to feel that certain omissions and commissions brought the kind of discomfort and accompanying unseemliness as lack of soap and water, then methinks Ideals and Idealism would scarcely be required in everyday reality, and might find their proper place and satisfaction in poetry and art.

### IV

This train of thought, so familiar to me since the war, has been brought to expression by being asked what I thought of Quinn's very eloquent rhapsody on Roger Casement.

"What I think of it? Why that it is the selfsame material this War is made of!"

And added that I hoped the younger generation would see to eliminating it from real affairs, and keeping it, with past

romance and madness, for our dramatic delectation, like Macbeth and his Witches and the Furies of Orestes.

My young friend seemed to agree, as I ardently hope that those who have grown out of childhood during this War will, many of them, do.

"But," she demurs, "one can't help admiring it, all the same, quite tremendously."

"Exactly. And what you people have to learn (for we are too old !) is that *admiration is not a test of usefulness*. Set it to music, put it into a wonderful form of verse, keep it to look at and rejoice in ; but at arms' length, *above* your life, if you will, but not *in* it. Learn the essential, salutary and consoling difference between Life and Art."

"But will people ever be satisfied with ideal emotions unless they believe them to answer to something really existing ?"

Perhaps not. Though to me, possibly because I am old, to do so would seem the sign of spiritual maturity, of having left behind the child's and the adolescent's faith in *wishes as horses*. The result, above all, of a more vital and more frequent interest in all kinds of science and philosophy.

We cannot yet say whether such a time will ever come ; for we are still only at the end of the Middle Ages so far as mental habits are concerned, not really at the beginning of a new era. Since even our atheistic philosophers, like Nietzsche and Bertrand Russell, are always taking up positions *vis-à-vis* of the old Gods whom they imagine themselves to have discarded. Not merely Nietzsche saying *how could there be Gods and I not one of them?* But less naively Bertrand Russell turning away from the sugary Eternities of other beliefs with a "I prefer the Eternities bitter, with such withering bitterness as gives the magnificent sense of Tragedy." Now I suspect that the bitter Eternities ministering to Nietzsche's *Amor Fati* and to Bertrand Russell's *Free Man's Worship* are mere little private brews of their own making ; and no more eternal, let alone eternally real, than the sugar and water and *eau de fleur d'oranger* which, as in the cut-glass carafe and tumbler of old French bedrooms, Mankind has been careful to place (when it had leisure to procure them) alongside of its uneasy pillow.

But we should die without such ideals, bitter or sweet ! Well ! what is music for, from Bach and Mozart to Strauss, except to minister to these legitimate needs ? Only do not pretend that it is the music of the Spheres performing like a Restaurant-band, for your sole satisfaction. Of all Idealism there is none more paltry than such treating of the Realities and Eternities as if they must fetch and carry for our Heart's Desire, however distinguished. And if there were Realities and Eternities thus interested in our persons and wishes, why surely, being so human and personal, they wotuld laugh at us, even as we should in their place.

*June-December, 1918.*

V

But Idealism, as the world at present exists, does a good deal of practical, by no means æsthetic, fetching and carrying. And, I am asked, by others and by myself, what could possibly replace it from the utilitarian point of view ? At present, *nothing* ; since its production will continue a long time yet, like that of religion. But eventually, I cannot but hope, Idealism might transform (after handing its emotional appeal to art and poetry) into something very modest yet at the same time very imperious. Something, for which I can find no existing name, for even *Duty* is too sounding, and lacks also the imperative of personal preference. Something whose refusal should imply that the refuser is an imbecile or a cad ; something which, short of being either, you or I *must* do, or oftener (since most commandments are negative) *must* refrain from doing. *Not* do, in the same sense as a decent child is taught *not* to spit, *not* slop its food upon the table, *not* grab its neighbour's bread, *not* spread its elbows, *not* drown other folk's voice or interrupt their speaking ; briefly, *not be a nuisance* ; and more particularly not a grown-up and sym-bolical nuisance, like the ill-mannered beasts of every nation-ality who have converted Europe into the obscene refuse-heap, moral and material, now spread before us !

I am asked whether what I should like to see in place of Idealism is the George Herbert "*sweeping of the room from the*

*Love of God?"* No, no more than the setting out of your best cheer for your chosen guests, or the tying of a nosegay for your beloved. No ! If the room is to be swept, I would rather you or I should sweep it not for anyone else's love, but for the love of the room and of sweeping things clean. Since, as my Satan knows, much to his sorrow, that also is love and is denied to him.

Then, says my friend, what you want instead of Idealism, is that people should think as clearly as they can, suspect their own emotional delusions as much as is humanly possible, in fact, be honest and wise and sympathizing from a sense of service ?

Perhaps that may be at the bottom of my meaning. And yet, no ! *Service*, when it does not suggest servility, has a smack of self-righteousness, of religious offices ; and that I am not sure whether I really like ; it is, as the French say, *se gober, gulping one's self down* in a ridiculous fashion. On the whole, I should like people, beginning with a regenerate self, to be discriminating, sceptical, imaginative, generous, sympathetic, scrupulous ; making allowances for the future and the unknown ; feeling the needs of others as a consequence of feeling one's own ; and to be this, or to try to do it, out of *decency*, behaviour to themselves mirrored in behaviour to others. Decency, like the decency which causes you to clean your person and properties, and desist from soiling, *more latino*, the public street and field paths ; *decency*, lack of which makes you horribly uncomfortable when it is in yourself, and disgusted and contemptuous when it is in others. *To be decent*. The expression has become English slang ; it has long been in common use (*anständig*) among the people at present called *Huns*.

*Decent* ; I like that better even than *decorous*, which suppresses the notion of what is due to oneself and substitutes something cognate to decoration or adornment. And, as I said, the mischief of Idealism is largely that it is too decorative. Noble, as the Muse remarked, but, like Adventure, a *trifle* overdressed. . . .

## LOVE OF ADVENTURE

*"Satan is always bored."*

## I

Quite at the beginning of the war, Mr. Lloyd George held out, among other inducements for enlisting, the wonderful oasis of adventure which the war would constitute in the drab and monotonous lives of our working classes. Such as survived would cherish the priceless memories of those fervid weeks and months. How many of his listeners (he spoke in early autumn, 1914) have survived to justify his words, it is perhaps best not to inquire; neither how much of that feeling of oasis remained after the adventure had lasted four years and a quarter. Mr. Lloyd George would probably be justified in so far as such of those survivors as survive sufficiently to become red-coated and doddering old Kaspers (*as in the Battle of Blenheim*), will derive some senile satisfaction, if not from their recollections of this war, at all events from their narratives of it; thus predisposing some future audiences of recruiting speeches to put some colour and liveliness into *their* drab, dull, lives by similar war-like interludes. The veteran, like the stay-at-home, is invaluable in keeping up the reputation of war as a Splendid Adventure.

An Adventure which, thanks to that established reputation, the drab-lived yokels and factory hands did quite undoubtedly snatch at when the Kaiser, and sundry others, among whom Mr. Lloyd George himself, offered them a chance. An Adventure, moreover, which other youths, of more variegated life, had undoubtedly hankered after (especially in France) for some years past; and one which, when they were killed off in time, like Charles Péguy and Rupert Brooke, was probably rapturous enough. As regards the surviving yokels and factory hands, they are, the war being over, suggesting to Mr. Lloyd George that he should see to their lives being the least little bit less drab and monotonous; and not by the repetition of such oases or interludes of war Adventure, whereof they are so incredibly unappreciative as to say, in their speech, that they are *fed up*; and refuse to take a fresh helping.

## II

Let us return to those who, being neither yokels, nor miners, nor factory hands, indeed men of fairly variegated lives, yet snatched with equal avidity at that unique Adventure.

There can be Adventure in the world of the spirit; you can make perilous explorations in your own soul, risking death and wounds to know how yourself will feel in hairbreadth, rapturous or ghastly situations. It was, I take it, that kind of inner Adventure, places and things only its external mechanism, which the younger generation talked (and was talked to by adventurous dons) about, under the name of *Experience of Life*. Not experience rushed through in desperate Faust-like quest after a consummate moment, to which one cries : "Stay ! thou art fair." Experience of Life rather to be compared with an endlessly turned over picture-book, displaying on every page one's own soul in some different attitude or emotion. This simile is mine ; and prejudges the case in an unfriendly spirit. Let me, therefore, exchange it for a better one ; better because arising in the mind of a young man at the very moment of thanking the Gods that since War must needs be, he should have been in time to take part in it. It occurs in a letter, written in 1914, by Frederick Keeling, a social investigator and reformer, whom the war duly killed off. He regrets, he says, that (thanks to the progress of civilization) his little son will not be given a chance of such "*a bite into the apple of life*."

Perhaps some of poor Keeling's surviving comrades may now agree with me, that life is not an apple for even the most privileged to bite into. Even, I am inclined to think, that thus to bite into it is a worse offence than that of our earliest parents, hungering as they did for the solid sustenance afforded by the Tree of Knowledge ; an offence, indeed, not against the Powers *above*, but the Powers *on all sides* encompassing Mankind, and one whose wages may well be, spiritual, and not merely, as with poor Keeling, bodily death.

This question of *biting into the apple of life* is, therefore, not without moral importance; indeed, connected, as you shall see, not only with the *Ballet of the Nations*, but with Satan the Waster. So, the better to make myself understood,

let me premise that this desire for a *bite into one's unknown self* (since that is what *experience* means in this case) is not to be confused with that mere crisis of dissatisfaction which comes, but also comes speedily to an end, in the existences of so many young people of parts. *That*, I mean that passing thirst for change as such, may possibly be due to some temporary physiological impoverishment after the completion of growth; more certainly, as many of us can testify, to the uneasy emergence of the individual man or woman out of the warm nest of habits and beliefs furnished by the home and the school, furnished by inheritance and tradition, by everything which young people are given and accept, almost without inventory; emergence therefrom meaning the discovery of oneself on a rather bleak and solitary branch, and not much blossom or fruit within reach. Such hunger for change accompanying the nonfulfilment of youth's conventional ideals and its egoistic, childish, takings-for-granted, I want to recognize as a frequent and natural phase of growth. Recognize also that from it may sometimes arise the hankering after those *Bites into the Apple of Life*. But it is not the same thing, such discontent being transient and oftenest ended by a fresh zest for interests and purposes, however humdrum. The attitude symbolized by *Biting into the Apple of Life* is not a passing one. What changes is mostly the Apple. For it is not *one* particular Apple you long for; in fact it is not any Apple at all, but your emotion of biting. What becomes of the bitten-into Apple is of no consequence; you may throw it away uneaten, or go on munching in hopes of some new sensation. Nine times out of ten you look round for another, a different Apple, or some other fruit, each Apple standing for a new phase of yourself. And the passing from Apple to Apple (please remark, without Faust's *blasé* consistent search after the *one and only Apple*) is what was preached and practised before this war, under the rubric of *taking life as an Adventure*; and again, of *cultivating curiosity as such*. Curiosity as such, comparing it with the child's impulse to taste of and sniff at every bottle, especially every closed one, is doubtless useful in our earliest stages; although even with regard to the lowest organisms, biology seems to replace Herbert Spencer's notion

of *fumbling*, by that of organized, hereditary attractions and repulsions, linking the individual to its surroundings and constituting the elements of all life's essential changes. Be this as it may, the mature human being ought to have no need for such crude curiosity, or rather neither time nor energy for it, because he should be dominated by curiosity which is *not* crude, by interests and problems and purposes differing from individual to individual according to his kind, a part of that great give-and-take between the ego and the surroundings.

And here, we are back at Keeling's *Apple of Life*. I may be prejudiced, but I suspect that the person who has curiosity to spare for *biting into the Apple of Life* must, for one reason or another, be at a loss for problems, interests, jobs, and let me add the old-fashioned word, *duties*. Also, for what is as necessary in, and for, life : at a loss for tastes, preferences and those impulses to thought and action bringing the human creature into contact with the Otherness, and, little as he may suspect it, freeing him from himself. It means being at a loose end.

That such was the case, and with a resultant desire to *Bite into the Apple of Life*, among the generation which the war has decimated or perhaps cured, seems to me evident. Also, that this quest for intellectual and emotional Adventure (Adventure of which their own soul was the field) made many, just like Keeling, welcome the war, and welcoming, justify it. I do not pretend to know what led to the existence of this state of mind. I can only suspect some hidden connexion, some parallelism of causes, between it and that "drab monotony" making, as Mr. Lloyd George told us, that other class of men welcome the war, the men supplying our necessities and conveniences, our food, warmth, light, clothes, and our *leisure*, while sharing in them so very unequally. Our younger intellectuals, even those working not at art or poetry, but at social questions, were apt, like Keeling himself, who was perpetually wondering how his work affected himself, to take even the Service of Man as a superior sort of game, and question whether some other might not be better worth the candle of their attention. Is it not probable, I cannot but ask myself, that these privileged youths, these of the variegated, as opposed to the

drab and monotonous lives, had too much given them? Not merely too many material advantages, but too many, at least for powers of assimilation unstimulated by effort or refusal, too many intellectual and emotional ones? Why even ideas and ideals, which had cost their elders so much heart-searching and painful rebellion (I appeal to the recollections of those who grew up in the years when Darwin and Renan were still dangerous heretics) even ideas and ideals had been furnished this over-lucky generation, abundant, various, ready-made, to pull about and wonder were they worth having? On the other hand (I am still trying to account for that desire for the Apple of War Experience) may there not have lingered among Keeling's contemporaries some of the old religious habit of referring real life to standards of perfection, "ideal goodness," "supreme values," or perfect faith and hope for which there is no warrant beyond itself? There is surely a resemblance between this latter-day longing for *something more interesting* (since that is at the bottom of the quest for Adventure) and the *cui bono* of Tolstoy and his heroes André and Levine; also of humbler minds who feel out in the cold for lack of Divine Justice and Divine Mercy, both of which were looked upon as a part of a man's legitimate birthright. At all events, it is significant that this desire for "Adventure" (do you remember William James actually casting about for "ideal equivalents of war"?), this refusal to let themselves be seized and dominated by the world's tasks and riddles, should have coincided, as it did, with the recurring demand, *à la* H. G. Wells, for a Companionable Deity. Can it be that these young men felt out in the cold, isolated, insignificant, in the universe whose myriad living meshes did not suffice to hold their souls and draw forth their spontaneous longings and efforts? Did these youths, who flung themselves so ardently into the great Adventure of War, feel like my puppet Satan, arid, impotent and bored?

### III

#### "SATAN CANNOT LOVE"

And before ending this note on Love of Adventure as such, let me remind my readers of Satan's definition of *Love*, love not

only of persons and (what is almost as personal!) causes ; but of occupations, problems, plans and *things*, the love *he* cannot feel.

In the revelations which Keeling and his war comrades, living and dead (alas, mostly dead !), are furnishing more and more, there is a frequent and curious harping upon the circumstance that the war and its miseries had opened their eyes to comradeship and love. Had they then, one may ask, been closed to them before ? Had these youths lived in what mystics would have called a condition of *aridity* ? Aridity, non-participation, not towards other men and women only, known or unknown, but aridity towards the vast impersonal brotherhood in which, when giving himself with joy or bitterness, effort or exultation, man shuffles off his little self, and receives in return a share of the inexhaustible living plenitude of things.

*New Year, 1919.*

### JUSTICE

*"I have a genuine regard for Justice, Clio."*—p. 39.

In Time of War, as during the private quarrels of individuals, Justice is but another name for Punishment ; at best for what is called *Compensation*, which implies taking away from one side money, opportunities, liberty, in order to give to the other ; and which, under a show of re-establishing the *status quo ante*, is oftenest an application of the "Eye for an Eye" principle or impulse. Of course, I am aware that the Mosaic, or any other statutory *Lex Talionis* is, taken historically, an attempt to regulate and diminish this impulse towards retaliation : an attempt to cut short, by saying "an eye for an eye *but no more than one eye*," the endless action and reaction of private vindictiveness. But beneath the "Eye for an Eye" kind of justice there lurks likewise a strong and very singular instinct, or more properly convergence of, what I suspect to be, two instincts of separate origin. One of these is that of relieving our pain, hence also the sense of our being injured, by hitting out at the object which has inflicted it ; or, in default, hitting out

at any other handy object, as when, being enraged, we kick a pebble, or, like Tolstoy's jealous husband, smash a thermometer; and, oftener still, when we vent upon our innocent family or servants the ill-humour produced by entirely different persons, like that other Russian, the jilted lady in Turgeniev who, when forsaken by her lover "*soufflèta sa femme de chambre puis s'évanouit.*" In short, there is the impulse to relieve discomfort by violent and, if possible, destructive or unkind action.

That is one half of the compound instinct of retaliation. The other half is formed by an impulse, cognate to sundry underlying æsthetic ones, of equalizing the balance; and which, in case of human grievances, turns to desire for *revanche* (which is not the same as *revenge*), determination to "get even with a person." And it reveals its kinship to the need for symmetry and rhythm by the spectator's purely contemplative demand that mischief done be balanced by mischief suffered. And, just as the more overtly æsthetic demand results in a lion on the right hand producing a lion (or other supporter) on the left, till the "heraldic lions" may continue for yards, so also the same instinct multiplies the gouged-out eye of Tom by the symmetrically gouged-out eye of Dick, with the unexpected result that the spectator, so far from being harrowed by a double dose of cruelty and pain, experiences the special well-being (*appaisement* is the untranslatable French word) of all æsthetic satisfaction, the ineffable sense that even as in a major cadence, "all's right in the world."

These two, so very dissimilar, elementary needs of our emotional constitution converge in what I have called the "Eye for an eye" instinct. And their fusion has doubtless greatly helped the legal and utilitarian policy by which, as just mentioned, society has rid itself of endless *vendettas* by saying, and feeling: "Justice is satisfied: Basta!"

Such is, I think, the genesis and constitution of our primæval, our primitive, notion of *Justice*, as embodied in codes and as so vehemently clamoured for in private and public quarrels.

Let it not be imagined that I doubt the usefulness of such a composite instinct and habit of retribution, especially in brutal times and with brutish man. Thanks to it the deterrent fear of punishment has doubtless been brought home, has grown

into our feelings of naturalness and fitness, become what people call "instinctive," nay, "moral"; and instead of being accounted a mark of cowardice has gained a new lease of life by taking on the distinguished status, accompanied, of course, by self-enhancement, the harmonious dignity, of a "Sense of Right." Since a vulgar malefactor may be deterred by ignoble fear; but an honourable man is deterred by the recognition that the punishment checking his own indulgence in lust, greed or violence, is something whereto his nobility freely consents, nay, is demanded by it.

All this, however, is Retributive Justice. And, like the Ancient Gods Jahweh or Themis, or Zeus, or whosoever presided over such retaliation, primitive mankind (including our modern selves when in a rage) does not seem to get much further forward. Justice is always provided with a sword. Indeed, arguing from contemporary oratory, you might almost imagine that swords were never used save for the purposes enumerated above. Or else Justice is furnished with the parricide's sack, dog and cock; or the torch and hissing snakes of the Eumenides; or, best of all, with those wholesale and eternal punishments wherewith the immortal and omnipotent Godhead competes so unfairly with poor ephemeral human judges and hangmen.

But there exists another possible conception and even practice of Justice; though one which, alas! no Godhead, that I know of, has ever employed towards his creatures: the Justice not of making things equal *afterwards* and through retributive duplication of evil; but the humbler, less dramatic, less conspicuous, Justice, of being fair *from the beginning*. This also has its æsthetic sanction, and one which, very fitly, has arisen not in men debased by injury endured, and itching to hand on this pain to others, but in mankind's joyful moments of leisurely comradeship; whence its name, delightfully symbolical of common recreation, and the keen happiness of well-grown youths: its name of *Fair Play*.

*Fair Play.* This means, instead of multiplying evil, that we seek to equalize chances of good; or, if an evil chance should enter, that it be borne by all, diminishing the weight of responsibility by distribution between present and past. *Fair Play*;

of all words, those whereof my English language and race have reason to be proudest, meaning as they do, the Justice which measures competing instruments and equalizes advantages, pits only equal rivals against each other and watches that only skill and prowess, qualities useful to all, or even good luck coming by turns to everyone, shōuld determine advantage. This is another Justice; this Goddess who, instead of carrying the blood-rusted sword and the bandage over her eyes, holds in her stainless hands the measuring tape and the surveyor's rod, the microscope and test-tube; a Justice gifted, moreover, with unclouded sight. Since in such matters the mechanical poise of scales is not enough. For what is it which those scales contain, and when and wherefore came it to be put there? Guilt and Innocence, answer old-fashioned codes; one flying up to heaven (as in mediæval pictures of the Angel of Judgment), the other sucked down into hell. Nay: but whence this guilt? How long the tenure and status of this innocence? Guilty to-day or innocent, as the case may be; but what of yesterday, last year, last century, and preceding ages? German ruthlessness to France in this last century; but French boastful cruelty, time after time ever since, as Alfred de Musset dared to boast: "*Notre Condé triomphant déchira sa robe verte,*" reminding those who claimed their German Rhine that there had been: "*La trace altière du pied de nos chevaux marquée dans votre sang.*"

Like all else in the universe such things are subject to strange metamorphose, often of innocence into guilt, guilt into innocence. They have a genealogy; and looking into that you descry queer intermarriages; the wickedness of one side incubated, nay engendered, by the remembrance of the wickedness of the other. Therefore this newer sort of Justice is no mere weigher of items: hers are the implements of analysis, pursuing qualities as the chemist or the physician, until from the gross and changing everyday appearance, they resolve into their ultimate elements. Their ultimate elements, and also how often! their common ones: the similar needs, actions, instinct, constitution of soul and body, alike everywhere, and to be found at the crucible's bottom whether what you put in for examination was the repulsive poisonous thing called Sin,

or the inestimable, pure virtue such as only abstract thought, but never real life, produces, even as in the chemist's laboratory.

At that rate, what becomes of Justice? Why, this *is* Justice, or should be. The Justice who sifts, who decomposes; who prevents, because she understands. The Justice of Man foreshadowed by Christ, by Buddha, by the Stoics, by all the greatest men, discarding retribution. Or rather: leaving retribution to those great inhuman, impersonal Forces which, admitting no intention, ignoring innocence or guilt, visit infraction of their laws even to the seventieth generation. Retribution can be just only when considered as Cause and Effect. That is a fact for man to understand and submit to; not surely for man to handle, since man himself is but the smallest fragment thereof.

Is it not time, if not to sheathe that reeking sword of Justice, at all events, dear fellow-victims, to hide it, as our fathers did the hangman's cottage, in void, ill-omened places, remote from the abode of decent folk? Is it not, above all, time to leave off boasts of unsheathing the foul, clumsy thing which is a token of our ineptitude, even like the trades whereof we are still too stupid to be rid, the butcher's and the hangman's: neighbours to the knacker and the prostitute.

So, in our speaking and preaching at least, let us begin to put the justice who analyses and neutralizes, and knows neither guilt nor innocence, in the place of the superannuated Justice, who tries to make things equal by adding a second blinded eye to the first one; a second man killed by the law, to the first man killed by the murderer.

## THE HARMONIUM OF SELF-RIGHTEOUSNESS AND THE TRUMP OF JUDGMENT

### I

"When the hymn-book concealed the bayonet and the harmonium the cannon . . ." G. Bernard Shaw said that, in an interview reported in the *Daily News* of December 17th, 1918.

I copy it out because, while having been and still being, absurdly pleased with myself for my *Harmonium of Self-Righteousness*, I am, if possible, still better pleased at finding that this item of my orchestral scoring should coincide with that of so accomplished a (musical) critic as G.B.S.

## II

Perhaps, however, I have been unduly hard on poor Self-Righteousness, assigning to her that particular Pecksniffian instrument. And alas, although I have not had the courage to say it in my *Ballet*, there sits also in Satan's Orchestra no less an allegorical personage than Righteousness herself. So now, in the seclusion of these notes, let me add that the instrument this *bona fide* Virtue plays upon, terrifying herself as well as others, is the *Trump of Judgment*.

I have said that *seeking for the responsibilities* is oftenest, and especially at this present moment, the search for someone on whom to vent your hatred, when indeed it is not also the search for someone to pay your war-bills. Such were the blasts of the trumpets which Hebrew financiers carried processionally round Jericho, reducing it to ruins.

The war has, however, taught me to discern another mode, less blatant but of mysterious paralysing potency, of playing on that Trump of Judgment. In this case Righteousness does not ask about responsibility for what has already happened ; it warns you to take heed of the Responsibility for what may happen. "Would you," mutters that muffled blast ominous of future enormity, "would you take on yourself the Responsibility of opposing This War when by doing so you might bring on ten years hence a three times worse one ? Will you take on yourself the Responsibility of indefinitely prolonging This War by encouraging the Enemy with your peace talk ? Will you load on to your conscience, and that of your contemporaries, the Responsibility for the slaughter of unborn millions destined to perish unless a Knock-Out Blow knocks militarism out of existence once for all ?" And variations on these themes *ad lib.*

These owl-hootings of the Trump of Judgment have silenced and paralysed many righteous and otherwise courageous

persons during these War years, playing upon their honest scruples. Indeed it takes a certain sceptical levity, or in the case of conscientious objectors, a certain fanatical righteousness of one's own, to resist the clammy impact on men's conscience of those words "take the responsibility."

These are appeals, more efficacious far than any which can be made to reason ; appeals to primæval, hidden, habits of superstitious awe, useful no doubt in their day and place, when, for instance, cannibal anthropoids were educated to civic virtues by the mystic roaring of pieces of wood swung quickly round at the end of bits of cord, in such a way as not to be distinguished from the voice of the Whatever-It-May-Happen-To-Be-Deity. Such virtuous emotions still lie potential in our enlightened selves, fostered by nursery methods and Semitic literature ; and Righteousness (who, unlike Self-Righteousness, suffers from queasiness and weak knees) occasionally calls them forth without our recognizing the antique superstitious strains.

Since I maintain that superstition is a matter less of dogma than of attitude ; less of *what* we believe than of *how* we believe it, whether standing erect and looking boldly into the however inscrutable darkness ; or cowering, face downwards, even in broad daylight. And this apart from the question of how we have come to that belief, whatever it be, although how we got it lends a quality to our belief, and is an indication of our attitude. But *how we came by a belief* affects this subject of the Trump of Judgment played on by (and playing on) Righteousness, only because, once a belief can thus affect our attitude, we become quite sure that it has been obtained in the very best way. "What does the Word of God say about it ?" asks Bunyan, whenever he hits up against Mr. Ignorance ; and it does not occur either to Bunyan or to Mr. Ignorance to add the further query: "How do we know it is the Word of God ?" Similarly when we pacifists are asked whether we will take the responsibility of the awful things which may happen in consequence of our views, it is quite useless to ask our contemporaries "how they know that such awful things are in the least likely to happen ?" Or how they can know that such awfulness will be more awful than, indeed as awful as,

that which, thanks to their scruples about future wars, or the prolongation of the present war, is happening at this present moment.

The voice of the Prophet, the appeal to that darkness called the Future, has the power, like other superstitious manifestations, of making the hair of our bodies, like Job's, to stand up.

It is some satisfaction, if anything can be satisfaction in such an evil Present, to remember that when those, among whom I am proud to be numbered, originally opposed the war and afterwards clamoured for a peace by negotiation, or at least a statement of war-aims, we did *not* have recourse to any such blood-curdling appeals to scruples, to such prophecies of a future worse than the present. We did not say "Will you take the responsibility of this war?"—a war of diplomats some called it in 1914! possibly lasting four years and more? Of its costing millions of casualties and millions of money, of its establishing a regime of Dora and Militarism, of its landing Europe in bankruptcy, famine and anarchic revolution?" None of these things did we suggest; to most of us they did not so much as suggest themselves. I, for one, imagined in my ignorance that a modern war must be as much briefer and less cruel as a modern operation is briefer and less cruel than an old-fashioned one. By Christmas it must be over; or surely by Easter! What we protested against was our country, *any* country going into war; because we knew that the best, shortest and most merciful war, must mean death and mutilation, waste of wealth; and must mean hatred. What we protested against was the notion that war could be the less of two evils; it was war as *war*; because in our eyes war was an incalculable evil, a stupid, obscene, superannuated thing, an artificially kept-up survival from the past, unfit for decent moderns. It is, as I said, some satisfaction to know that we did *not* play upon people's fears of the unknown; that we did not talk of *responsibilities*; that we blew no Trump of Judgment; that what came was not the fulfilment of our ill-omened prophecies; that we did not say "you will see"; that we do not say now "we knew best."

March, 1919.

## III

And before leaving Self-Righteousness and Righteousness, let me say that, even like war, fanatical, revolutionary terrorism are crimes, crimes in their evil results, not in their intentions, springing equally from perhaps the least suspected of all our intellectual and moral failings : the Righteous man's trust in the purity of his intentions, and in the validity of his beliefs. Oh! The Righteous! The *bona fide* Righteous! Paraphrasing the Italian Renaissance proverb which says : *Dagli amici mi guardi Iddio ; Che dai nemici mi guarderò io*, our humble prayer might be ; If only God and His Angels would take charge of honest, sincere and zealous men, the poor world could easily cope with the rogues and the monsters.

## INTOLERANCE

We pretend, nowadays, to think it silly, nay, inconceivable. Nothing is less so. Heretical opinion means the possibility of divergent action, the probability of such refusal of united action as may be required to compass the desire or allay the fears of those who think . . . well ! as *they ought to think*. Let alone that in times of religious faith such lack of conformity to universal practices, even such lack of belief in their efficacy, might have drawn down on the whole community the ill-will of Gods who manifested it in earthquake, famine and pestilence.

But there is a deeper and more abiding reason against heresy, political as well as religious. Heresy means that *you*, you the orthodox, are being criticized by the heretic, silently perhaps, but considered in the wrong ; and the obstinacy of this heretic is the measure of his criticism and of *your* alleged wrongness. Now, to be considered in the wrong, to be treated as in the wrong, is a diminution of that inner atmosphere without which one chokes ; a lowering of that spiritual temperature without which one is chilly and comatose. Of course, the heretic is similarly diminished by *your*, the orthodox person's, thinking *him* in the wrong ; but then the heretic by definition *is* wrong, whereas *you*, the orthodox person, are by definition *right* ; and

it is not fair or tolerable to have the slightest doubt cast on your rightness, when you *are* right ; let alone the risk of your feeling even the faintest and most transient doubt about being right, when, by definition, you are. Thus, Intolerance resolves itself into one of the many uncatalogued forms of vital self-defence ; and from this self-defensive point of view is as legitimate as it is intelligible.

Of course in ordinary life we are aware (though we do not allow that awareness to become too plain or too frequent) that, just as there are many of our immediate neighbours whom we secretly think fools, so there must be some, probably indeed the self-same individuals, who think *us* fools. But in our individual capacity we are accustomed to pretty short commons of self-esteem, deliberately tightening our belt (to do so is called *being modest*) to this kind of starvation. Only the more do we require to eke out our poor individual rations of self-complacency from some large and generous common store : individually we may be nothing, our opinion of no kind of consequence ; but as a family, class, parish, community, sect, nation, how different ! In every church of every creed, in every mosque or temple or chapel, we worship not its deity only, but quite especially (though unadvowedly) our own share of that common sacrament of *feeling ourselves in the right*. In every flag each inhabitant of a country salutes his microscopic but very comforting portion of the righteousness and glory of his nation. When Doctor Johnson averred that he always felt comfortable within consecrated precincts, that great prophet of collective wisdom and prejudice was testifying, little though he knew it, to the unspeakable comfort of knowing one's belief to be shared by many men and to have been shared by many more. But Doctor Johnson would not set foot in a presbyterian place of worship, even when no worship was going on ; and he had, as we know, little patience with nonconformists and unbelievers : were not these ill-conditioned people laying sacrilegious hands on that consecrated edifice from whose sheltering walls he breathed-in a comforting sense of righteousness and supreme common sense ?

## HATRED

After Widow Fear and her brood, Hatred is the stupidest among the Passions composing that orchestra. Cunning, of course, as stupid people so often are, but always over-reaching itself. What stupidity could be greater than to display, to advertise, one's own inferiority in the course of complaining of one's enemy? Stupider than ever, when the oversight is committed by an extraordinarily clever and in other matters well-advised man, as when Guglielmo Ferrero (*Secolo* of Jan., 1917) made it a Pro-Ally grievance that German influence in Italy was depriving that country, not merely of native commerce and manufactures but, in the Italian universities, "of the very little" (*quel pochissimo*) which "during the last forty years had contrived to keep an Italian look and an Italian soul." (*Aveva conservato anima e faccia Italiana.*)

One remembers, of course, how in the eighteenth century Bodmer, the Stollbergs, Herder, etc., complained that French influence had warped, had denationalized, the literary genius of the German people. But with this difference: that instead of going to war with the French *Mossiè* (indeed it took Jena and a Kingdom of Westphalia to move the German intellectuals to war), Germany saved *her* "*pochissimo*" by the production of Kant, Goethe, Schiller and sundry others.

## II

Closely connected with Hatred's stupidity is Hatred's lack of breeding: and this also is a *minus* which people attempt to hide. Now what we call civilization is, among other important things, a system, socially imposed and traditionally handed down, not only of morals, but of manners and taste; of *inhibitions* hiding the vulgarer impulses of the old Adam. Such "thou shalt nots" are apt to disappear when a certain pitch of individual feeling is reached; the angry man is not restrained from making himself odious and ridiculous even by the presence of those who do not share his impulse to bluster, knock things and people about, and use bad language.

Need we be surprised when war breaks down these inhibitions in everyone alike, makes hatred permissible, nay meritorious, in all the members of a segregated multitude, need we be surprised (but of course we aren't surprised at our own doings !) that responsible statesmen talk in terms of "knock-out blows," "squealing for peace," nay such milder vulgarities as "first-class lies" ?

These are proofs of the stupidity of Hatred. And that is the reason why, whenever Hatred has a little good sense or a little good breeding left, it takes care instead of growing utterly discordant, to be kept to its right pitch, by the well-tuned Harmonium of Self-Righteousness.

### III

Like all things which are stupid, Hatred, most tragic and most soul-destroying of passions, is not without its comic side. As such may surely be accounted the statement made during the earlier years of the war, universally in England and more sporadically among the less self-righteous but highly sentimental and idealistic peoples of the Continent, *that they felt no Hatred*. A proof that they were so steeped in it, they and their neighbours, that, like those saturated with tobacco smoke or some other vile odour, they no longer perceived its presence about their persons. A proof also that Hatred, when of individual towards individual, being a hindrance or a bore to those who do not share it, is apt to be concealed or decently cloaked by the persons whom it animates, until they cease to be aware of their secret indulgence in that passion. So that it comes to pass that only a war (or something equally unanimous and respectable) reveals to the moralist that Hatred is one of the cheapest and most usual resources of his own and everyone else's dull existence.

### IV

The later years of the war got beyond such prudishness ; the Harmonium was sent away : campaigns or missions of Hatred were preached. But in those earlier days (before, as Liberal papers now hint, all the Idealists who enlisted in 1914

had been killed off, before the baser elements changed the character of the pure and lovely war), in the earlier idealizing days, one was frowned upon for suggesting that English people *could*, under whatsoever provocation, condescend to Hatred. "Where do you see anything of the sort in *this* country?" one was asked in perfect sincerity.

Why, in the choice of information about enemies and enemy countries. The pleasure of hating, so well disguised by those indulging in it, is revealed by the zeal and zest in collecting and retailing everything which disparages the object of hatred, by the disdain of everything which might suggest some lingering good qualities, or a common nature. "But they have no good qualities, they are of a totally different nature," exclaims Hatred. That is what Hatred always *does* say. For, odd as it sounds, the nature of Hatred is to hate; and you can't hate what is good, or what is shared by yourself.

## HEROISM (AND HUMBLER VIRTUES)

### I

It is the very essence of Heroism to be generous, lavish. It spends without counting. More characteristic, alas, it takes stock even less of the value of the thing, the aim, the cause, for which it spends itself. What Heroism wants is to dare and die. Anything will do to dare and die for.

Also, being lavish with its own life and goods, it is reckless equally with those of others. What does it matter, after all, how the world looks once Heroism has followed that impulse of dying for the world or for something in it?

Now there are things worth risking life for: the discovery you want to make, the invention you want to try, the peak you want to climb, or the dying creature you want to save. And many others no doubt, according to your kind and times. But of all the things for which life is most readily risked, and least worth risking it for, is surely a quarrel. Since a quarrel always implies a momentary loss of all sense of values. For the thing you are quarrelling about, advantage, as may be, or s

honour, depends upon the upshot of the quarrel, especially a quarrel conducted with brute force; and the quarrelling mood, the quarrel itself as distinguished from its objects, immediately supersedes, with its reciprocal offences and insults, dangers and losses, these same objects by which it was set going. This is the case even when those original causes of the quarrel have not been mere pretexts, excuses for a wish to fight, to hit out, to hurt, a wish to *down* due to unconsciously accumulated irritations from without and irritability from within. I mean that even when the quarrelsome feeling is not what has originally set going that quarrel, yet it is the quarrel itself, the fighting, and calling names and doing ill turns, which keeps up and reproduces the quarrelsome, the fighting spirit. But, as remarked, a lurking willingness to quarrel, to vent ever so many suppressed and thwarted inner dissatisfactions, exists or arises at times even in the most peaceful breast. And but for its latent readiness—the lust, say, for bruising and stinging with words in the peaceable battles of friendship! decent and reasonable beings would find but very few things about which to quarrel in private life. How much less would there be to fight about in the impersonal, indeed very largely the metaphorical, relations of modern nations! I say *metaphorical* advisedly. For most of it *is* just metaphor and no more: mere words with a heady trail of emotional association from the hands which bandied them in the past, from the musty pages of books where they have lain with the yellow laurel leaves of forgotten victors and the incense grains left over from oblations to obsolete divinities. *Metaphorical*. For when a nation nowadays is described as “fighting for its existence,” or “for all that makes existence valuable,” this is usually on a par with a lover *dying for Love*; on a par oftenest with the “*I would give a great deal to know . . .*” when in reality you would give just nothing at all, except the agreeable exercise of nosing in your neighbours’ affairs. But whereas in these prosaic days lovers no longer think it fine to commit (or at least to meditate and threaten) suicide because Phyllis has “*broken their heart*,” thousands of men are still doomed, nay still doom themselves, to die because their nation’s existence is said to be *at stake*, which nine cases out of ten is as

wide of the mark as the cruel lady's breaking of her lover's heart. That lover's heart mends ; he loves another lady ; or even if he continues loving the cruel one, he finds some other interest in life. And similarly, nations, which are far less subject to death than poor individuals, continue existing after . . . well ! after they have lost the war undertaken for bare existence.

All this is objectively true, as you can verify by a candid examination even of the garbled testimony of History, at all events of such countries as do not have their whole inhabitants put to the sword in the fine biblical fashion, or sold into the harem of the Great King or on the markets of even classical Hellas. But the metaphors are true to the subjective condition of those who apply them to the amazing literalness of war. The jilted lover, or the lover who is afraid of being jilted, *feels* as if his heart must break ; as if he could not live another day. The fighting nation *feels* as if it were going to be snuffed out unless it be victorious ; as if, short of victory, life would contain nothing worth living for. Since whatsoever we strive for or cling to with passionate longing, and for which we stake or are willing to stake life or welfare, becomes (in the measure of that longing and that staking) the paramount object of our life, the one which seems worth living and (often consequently) dying for. Such is the despotism of love or fear. But that merely means that this paramount, this sole object of desire or fear is the only one which, at that moment and in those conditions of our surroundings and our soul, we *can* possibly feel as all-important. It means, like nearly all metaphorical talk, that there is an emotional valuation going on ; that we identify our life with whatever, at a given moment, is uppermost in consciousness. To obtain, to avoid, that object we offer, we sometimes stake, everything else ; simply because everything else has in so far ceased to attract or attach us.

Thus Esau, doubtless, identified life with the mess of pottage for which he sold his birthright. Thus, for a birthright of "freedom," "honour," "national existence," which only our death can probably deprive us of, we go forth, and send forth others, to death, that holds no place in its void for these or any

of the things we dread or cling to. "For the grave cannot praise thee, death cannot celebrate thee: they that go down into the pit cannot hope for thy truth. The living, the living, he shall praise thee, as I do this day." (Isaiah xxxviii, 18.)

## II

Between the trenches and the C.O.'s gaol, the latter, I am bound to say, seems to me the less horrible. *But not necessarily the easier to choose.* For the choice leading to the trenches is the whole matter; the trenches, and the barracks long before, take care that you should not escape, once enlisted; let alone that, ever since conscription there remains no act of choice. Whereas the choice made by the C.O.'s is not once for all; it is prepared, and hourly renewed. There is everything to make it difficult to stick to and nothing to help it on. It is an individual choice, unassisted by imitative gregariousness, *esprit de corps*. A choice which the individual must assert afresh every minute against the sense of loneliness, disgrace, and the recurring doubt that after all the majority may be right and he be wrong.

In so far it is perhaps a sample of heroism, certainly not greater, but more difficult. Moreover, and that is what I want to come to, a sample of the kind of public-spiritedness and endurance which the Past has not sufficiently produced, but the democratic future will increasingly require. These C.O.'s will be remembered because they have set the fashion which other men must follow; as poor little *Puffing Billy* is remembered and wondered at because of the new kind of locomotion which he inaugurated.

And on the other hand, the last veterans of this war, "Old Kaspers" as in Cowper's poem, of ninety or a hundred, may be looked at by our descendants with something of the romantic horror which thrills visitors to the *Iron Virgin* in Nürnberg dungeons.

*August, 1917.*

## III

War undoubtedly increases, revives, by its demands, the heroism and self-sacrifice which might otherwise have atro-

phied. Not so long ago, the late William James was busy thinking out, bless him ! all manner of ingenious *substitutes* for this beneficent power of war. And as to France, its younger philosophers and poets, with George Sorel (*de la Violence*) and poor Péguy at their head, were dreadfully put about to revive the spirit of Corneille's heroes and heroines, *l'Esprit Cornélien*. None of these moral *connaisseurs* seem to have been struck by the thought that such artificial manufacture (protected, like beetroot sugar in the unsuitable climate of Italy !) suggests that our civilization requires less and less of these particular virtues. And what, after all, is civilization except a gradual lessening of such privations and sufferings as need heroism and self-sacrifice for their endurance? Meanwhile the war has shown there was plenty of heroism and self-sacrifice to be got for the asking, and also plenty of barbarism to call it forth.

It comes therefore to this : are we to breed virtues for which our lack of civilization occasionally makes a demand, thereby perhaps increasing the frequency of that demand ? Are we to educate the war-like spirit in case it be needed, even if that spirit's prevalence keeps up the need for it ? Or are we to work at altering our conditions in such a manner as to lessen and eliminate that need, even if in so doing we diminish the supply of military virtues ? Or the third alternative : are we to try to do both things, to abolish street fights, yet at the same time to teach men to use their fists and, as our fathers did, allow the quality to carry swords in case of brawls ? Or, again, are we, which is what William James was after, to teach fencing and boxing as part of a liberal curriculum, of a decorative ideal, just because the use thereof has come to an end ?

Does it occur to nobody that a new, a different, even only slightly different, civilization may, while ridding us of the need for certain kinds of virtue, increase the need, or at least the output, of certain other ones ? May not a higher civilization repose upon more modest and daily virtues: the virtues of giving good measure in all things and especially in truth and effort, just as a lower civilization requires the more intermittent and showy virtues, those making themselves heard

with drum or church organ, attracting with initiatory mysteries and myths, which men like William James, and certainly Sorel and those other young Frenchmen (many of them killed in good earnest by this time), were hankering after when the natural demand and supply of them seemed coming to an end ?

This thought, I mean of such daily, hourly, unostentatious virtues, or rather, I should like to call them *decencies*, moral as well as material, has haunted me for many years. Perhaps because I have lived much in those Latin countries where you cannot always count on them. It was of them that that great novelist and genuine citizen, the late Giovanni Cena, was thinking when, at the time of the Messina earthquake and its manifold revelations of corruption and ineptitude, he wrote "*Italia non è ancora una nazione*," meaning "*l'Italia non è ancora un paese civile*" ; and urged such education as should stop turning every Italian street into a privy, and should dispense every traveller from counting his change and roping his luggage.

These are humble virtues, but militant enough, and needing a constant overcoming of moral inertness and social cowardice, sometimes a painful facing of isolation and misunderstanding. Let alone that there are decencies also in intellectual matters, which are not so much as dreamed of ; every one of us "intellectuals" indeed, violating them all day long in that carelessness of truth and that need for effect which are almost an integral part of all literary practice ; moreover in the self-righteous and persecuting habit we have taken over, with so many little picturesque and lucrative superstitions, from our predecessors the priests, prophets and medicine men.

#### IV

Particularly as a result of Nietzsche's teachings, we have become apt to clamour for heroism and similar war-like virtues from a growing dislike to what used to be called Christian Virtues. For Nietzsche brutally points out that mansuetude, submissiveness, humility, a good deal of what he called "*Moral*" (as distinguished from what we mean by *Morality*), and all the various hypocrisies standing for them,

are but the natural response to the *Will to Power*, to the aggressiveness and ruthlessness whose fine frank swagger hypnotized his really tender and timid nature. What Nietzsche failed to see (for the seeing of it would have done for his thesis), is that the obsolescence, atrophy and selecting away of these aggressive habits would imply obsolescence, atrophy and selecting away of these ignominious virtues. If Nietzsche's *Bestien*, blond or otherwise, are still offended in their taste by the presence of slaves and saints and lily-livered moralists, they and their Nietzschean admirers have only themselves to thank for the existence of such offensive beings. If no one ever smote the right cheek, not even Jesus could turn the left. Now such presenting of the other cheek to the smiter is, according to Nietzsche's own (and in many points correct) genealogy of "Moral," a mode of defence, a vital response like the feigned death, the colour camouflage and parasitism of certain kinds of animals ; like the gregariousness and the readiness for domestication of other ones. Or, to speak with more biological correctness, wherever there is rapacious and ruthless strength, only those creatures can survive who, instead of relying upon a smaller power for ruthless rapacity, happen to be gifted with less heroic modes of defence : lying low to the bullies and occasionally living off them. This is the story of one whole half of mankind, namely Womankind. It is the story of the labouring, garnering classes ; of the priesthood and the intellectuals ; it is the story of the emergence of mind from matter ; a story which Nietzsche very logically denounced for what he calls its *pudenda origo*.

Such ignominy has always decreased with the decrease of the bold brave brutality which had called it forth. We can already note that the preaching of what are called *Christian* virtues (though Jesus Christ, heaven knows, was at no pains to preach them !) is discontinuing even in our still imperfectly policed and equitable civilization. Humility, for instance ; is no longer inculcated save towards theological mysteries, and the younger generation of the well-to-do can scarce remember or conceive that it ever was. Similarly, obedience to superiors, indeed, the very notion of superiors. Forgiveness has lost its sense where people have less tremendous

things to forgive or means of avenging them. Except in wartime, when one set of men can be tortured and ruined and torture and ruin in return, to forgo revenge would be an injunction insulting to decent people: even criminals and criminal nations are supposed to be chastened largely for their own good. The ignominious virtues towards our fellow-men will fall into oblivion; even as the virtuous submission to God's inscrutable and inconvenient mercifulness in sending pestilence is no longer preached since the discoveries of Jenner, Pasteur and Lister.

With fewer bullies stalking the globe, nay, I am sorry to add, with fewer heroes, or with heroes of a less dashing kind, there will also be fewer slaves, and far fewer sneaks and hypocrites.

### THE DRUM OF UNANIMITY

#### I

The reader will have guessed that under this symbol is meant a power coercive of the nerves, as well as of the muscles, which is by no means always military. Among primitive peoples, the Drum, as we all know, appertains to religion even more than to war. It may well be that, only because our religious rites are witnessed rather than enacted by the faithful, the Drum has become associated with Heroism and not with piety. In the present Ballet, the Drum is therefore handled only by Heroism. Piety, or Piety's *locum tenens*, being duly furnished with a less primitive but more mellifluous instrument, viz., the harmonium. Indeed nowadays the compelling force of Unanimity can be felt in the full splendour of its brutality only in the Orchestra of Patriotism, and under Heroism's resounding taps; although we may all live to see that Drum played turn about by Idealism and Envy in a more up-to-date but not less formidable band, as seems already the case in Russia. Be this as it may, the Drum is here intended to symbolize *Unanimity*; to my mind the essential something which sociologists either abuse (like Tarde and Dr. Trotter in his earlier chapters) under the name of *Crowd* or *Herd*; or

reverence under that, beloved by Durkheim and his school, and revered by the same Dr. Trotter since the war, of *Collectivity* or *Nation*. Since it is Unanimity, implying exclusion of individual differences, sameness of quality, volume and resonance and repetition of movement, by which the multitude gets its compelling power. Moreover, it is, I think, Unanimity for its own sake, the fascination of marching on and on in step with others, the magic of feeling one's will merge in a vaster one, which explains, far more than the ostensible aim of that homogeneous multitudinous marching, the amazing phenomena of what is called *crowd psychology*. What matters is not the tune, the mode, the dominant and tonic, since the Drum knows none of these things, it is the sameness of timbre, the unchanging rhythm, the vast living uniformity, the mysterious property of multiplication applied to the smallest, and, taken singly, most trifling unit of feeling and purpose.

And here, before examining a little into this queer subject of Unanimity, let me confess that the requirements of my allegorical *mise-en-scène* have betrayed me into a psychological, a sociological, inaccuracy : it is not, in real life, Heroism who plays the Drum ; it is the Drum which plays upon Heroism.

## II

I want to make it plain that in referring the passions and activities of groups of men (what, rather than the *crowd*, I would call the *multitude*) to the psychology of their constituents as individuals, nothing is further from my thoughts than accounting for the peculiar psychology of this multitude by regarding it as a bigger kind of individual. I can see nothing better than myth-mongering and verbal confusion in current talk about a *collective consciousness*, as if consciousness existed except in the individual. It is because the individual's feeling and behaviour are changed as soon as he becomes one of a multitude, that the multitude, group or crowd, differs in general attitude and action from an individual ; as much as a crowd differs from a single man or woman in its outlines and colour.

We require, indeed, to know what shapes and colours dominate in the individuals composing the crowd, or rather what shapes and colours they possess in common ; after which comes the question how those shapes and colours coalesce with, neutralize or cover each other. Only then can we foretell what will be the general shape produced by the combination, reduplication and masking of individual shapes ; and in what way the colours existing in the components blend with, intensify or are dulled by juxtaposition with those of the other components. For although the group as a whole contains no lines and no colours which cannot be accounted for by those of the individuals making it up, their combination alters them into new shapes and shades and harmonies which do not exist in the single individual. In this manner the psychology of a multitude, though dependent upon that of each man or woman thereof, is different from that of these men and women taken singly. And the essential fact about a multitude is that it does not merely multiply feelings, beliefs and actions, but that it selects, between those which are common to many and those which are confined to few of its members ; accumulating the first and suppressing the second. Moreover that this coming together of many individuals magnifies those qualities which, even if less common, are for whatever reason more provocative of imitation, or represent a lapse to a lower level, a diminished psychic effort, wherein is the true explanation of a great deal of what is spoken of as *contagion* ; while at the same time eliminating whatever is rare or is difficult to imitate.

This is not the whole matter. There is, in every individual, a certain amount of potentialities of feeling and action, which are normally suppressed by that individual's other and more dominant tendencies and habits ; and these may be called forth by that individual's inhibitions being removed ; and, on the other hand, the encouragement of finding similar feelings and tendencies in the other members of the group. Hence the queer revelations of unsuspected capacities for heroism, vulgarity or cruelty taking place as soon as an individual becomes aware of feeling and acting as part of a multitude.

All life is subject to the competition and inter-selection of

constituent elements. There is one kind of selection perpetually taking place in the individual soul ; quite another obtains as soon as the elements competing for domination are no longer in the single individual, but in a multitude made unanimous by the pressure of similar necessities.

Hence it is that what I have symbolized as the Drum possesses only one note without overtones. Unanimity is not harmony, it is unison.

### III

Perhaps to my reader's inconvenience, I am usually less concerned with what word-badges to pin on my sleeve than with the meaning of the ideas, such as they are, which I occasionally find in my head. Thus I confess to not having ascertained whether or not I am an *Individualist*. Before attempting this inquiry, I should have to ask what people exactly mean by being an individualist ; and *that* they are in no hurry to explain, except by allowing one to gather from the context that the term is one of endearment, or, as the case may be, one of contumely.

This much, however, is clear to myself although (like so much else of my sayings) it may seem at first sight paradoxical, namely : that if I want to warn and protest against the rule of the *we*, against the multitude and its unanimity, it is precisely because I am intensely aware of the individual's shortcomings. The individual is always lopsided in nature and development, and as often as not, deluded by his feelings ; at best but a fragment ; fatally a *here* and a *now*. For that reason he needs to have his shortcomings compensated, his excesses neutralized, his *here* and his *now* enlarged, corrected, by other fragmentary individuals and their bias and passion, their *here* and *now*.

Both for himself and for the world at large, the Ego is safe only when criticized and counteracted by the *Alter*. And the greater the number of those criticizing and counteracting others, the greater will be the chance of whatever is fit for life (*viable* as the French say) in the individual, continuing to live ; and whatever is deciduous being lopped or dropped.

But please, mark my meaning: the efficacy and wholesomeness of this criticism and counteraction lies in its variety, in its representing different states of feeling, different points of view, different temperaments and interests, different *heres* and *nows*; in fact the imperfect piecemeal individual being integrated by the greater number of different other individuals standing to one another as conflicting, collaborating and compensating.

It is impossible to imagine anything more utterly unlike this (to me) desirable state of affairs than the domination of the *multitude*, of the magnified and blurred Ego called *We*. Since, inasmuch as *we*, unanimity means loss of everything distinguishing one individual compound from another; loss of everything which can correct the one individual by the other individuals. The *we* (when it really is a *we*), the unified Nation, sect or class or school, is an average of all that is similar in the component individuals. It is a huge individual, artificially or accidentally made up, with all differences left out and all resemblances magnified. The multitude which speaks of itself as *We*, has the intensity, the passion of the individual Ego, but instead of being subjected to vivifying criticism, correction and selection, it is set apart in safe and enormous isolation.

"*Pourquoi suit-on la pluralité?*" asked Pascal, answering: "*Parce qu'elle a plus de force.*"

By no means only that; but quite as much because it has, what Pascal denied it, *plus de raison*; that is to say, a greater repetition and volume of *raison*. Now, if it is a heterogeneous plurality as opposed to a homogeneous one, it will, because it is a plurality, represent the greater amount of reasons, of experience and reflection; hence whenever such various reasons, experience and reflection coincide, the greatest amount of presumable knowledge, intelligence and good sense will result. Only, for this to be the case, the unity must be established by the coincidence, the convergence of independent reasons and experience, not the mere repetition, the mere multiplication of the same reasons and experience. In the vastest as well as in the humblest concerns of life, the rule of scientific research holds good, which is: many separate, independent experiments or documents lead to truth; but a

merely re-stated experiment, a copied document, results only in worthless repetition.

## IV

Like other philosophers, Mr. Bertrand Russell has pointed out that war gives long-desired opportunities to long-suppressed instincts.

Of course. But first and foremost it gives to mediocre personalities an opportunity to increase their volume and weight by uniting till all sense of mediocrity is lost. *L'union fait la force*: a crowd *feels* strong, it often *is* strong; and what is more to the point a crowd feels safe. It must be an entrancing experience to find oneself doing, once in a way, what all one's life one has been afraid of doing in company, and sometimes ashamed, let alone unable to do, by one's self: to kill, to lynch, nay, merely to bawl down or out-vote.

The kind of persons one may call by the title of Dostoievsky's novel *Humiliés et Offensés*, though humiliated and offended, not so much by social as by natural, inferiority, must have the time of their life, their *Faust moment*, when they can thus crush with comparatively little moral effort some one or some opinion they would perchance have run away from in ordinary life. By the magic of numbers, War undoubtedly makes Heroes and Religious Revivals make Saints.

But what the poor world of reality really requires is heroes who can be heroic, and saints who can be saintly, on their own account, without a crowd to back them.

War, like religion, affords a much-needed satisfaction of the desire to feel oneself in the right, which is one of the strongest though the least noticed of human vital instincts. To feel oneself in the right means an attitude, a particular gait and deportment, a whole way of being. It is probably as conducive to good circulation and digestion as these are obviously conducive to good opinion of ourselves. To feel oneself in the right means that one has standing room, that one stretches into the infinite instead of being squashed into a corner. Now, many individuals have no special reason for this feeling; and if they indulge in it none the less, they are

apt to pay dearly for this indulgence at the hands of their neighbours' similar desire to feel in the right. And when what you feel right about is a collective opinion or an attitude shared by your neighbours against a more or less distant and partly imaginary opponent, you can expand without fear, you can *stand on your rights as a man*. 'Or more properly: you can, in a different sense of the word, trample upon the rights of some man who does not happen to form part of that crowd. *Esprit de corps* is the least altruistic and occasionally the least courageous of all spirits, though it enables men to do, and to do without, much whereof they would be unable if set down by their lone selves.

The Drum is so justly popular an instrument not only because it helps you to march and even to attack, but also because it helps you to hold up your head, to stiffen your back and to strut.

April, 1916.

Before putting the Drum back on its stand, let me add that, on second thoughts, however useful an occasional *bona fide* hero or saint, what the poor real world really wants is not anything so exceptional or so suited to only exceptional circumstances. The world wants a social habit of certain kinds of behaviour, a habit organized by being collective and traditional, but perpetually questioned, checked, renovated, given a new lease of life, by individual and reciprocal criticism. We want habits made easy and firm by automatism but at the same time accepted voluntarily and with benefit of inventory and running the gauntlet of conscious criticism.

We want a fiddle made of varied, select and well-fitted bits of wood whose fibres have been tempered by age and much good playing; a fiddle which must, *at whatever cost of delay and trouble, be tuned afresh each time*. We have got, or ought to be getting, beyond the use of the Drum, save for the occasional making of mock thunder in the overtures to operas.

April, 1916.

### INDIGNATION .

This is a majestic passion as well as one which doubtless has its use. But it is not—how express my thoughts without

being cynical?—it is not majestic all over and right through. Indignation, splendidly wrathful like young Achilles, has a vulnerable heel through which meanness can poison it. It can be petty because it is partisan. It wants to launch out, its very nature is launching out, punishing, devastating. Hence it can never afford to be fair; never listen to the other side, for that would stay its hand, hinder its full angelic swoop. And in its swoops and strides, in the vast execution which it does, it accumulates the objects of its wrath. The bigger the heap, the better; the larger the mass of conflagration, the more superb the purifying flames. Unknown to itself, Indignation requires adequate guilt, and piles it up, eking out scantiness of evil with credulity. For Indignation is not only a passion, like every passion, concentrated on itself; Indignation (let us admit and try to remember this depressing truth!)—Indignation is a passion which enjoys itself. I have dared to apply to Indignation what must seem, I am afraid, an almost profane adjective, namely *pettiness*. Yet no one can deny that Indignation almost invariably leaves off in the very place where charity is said to begin, at home, or with one's friends and allies. Indeed with one's own self. In the most magnificent of all records of Indignation, that of Jehovah, the cause of these cosmic fires is always indignation at his own commandments being disobeyed, his own gifts and position receiving less recognition than they deserved. The unpardonable offence is “going a-whoring” after other Gods. “I am a jealous God” he frequently insists, and acts up to the character.

February, 1919.

### PITY

It is her close kinship to Indignation which at times makes Pity dangerous. But for that flaming twin dragging her along on devastating pinions, Pity might transform into the very thing which Indignation dislikes most, namely Sympathy, itself in turn metamorphosing into Comprehension, and thence into True Justice, the Justice which, so far from being blindfold, sees, scrutinizes, and discriminates. Most often, as already hinted, Indignation drags Pity along, prevents that beneficent double transformation, and makes Pity pitiless;

## SATAN'S BENEDICTION

*"Ye are going forth, O Nations, to join in Death's dance even as candid highhearted Virgins who have been decoyed by fair show into the house of prostitution. . . . "*—p. 45.

## I

We know from the Parable that Virgins are not invariably wise. And it seems likely that calamities worse than missing a sight of the Bridegroom would befall rather the foolish than the wise ones. Or, when the Virgins stand for Nations, rather those entrusted to foolish guardians ; since Virgins of this kind (and self-governing nations no more than those under the thumb of despots) are not allowed the degree of freedom enjoyed by the present younger generation and seemingly by those scriptural bride's-maids, but are in the position rather of the old-fashioned heroine of romance looked after by some disastrously silly parent, or even chaperoned, like Goethe's Gretchen, by a self-seeking pseudo-pious Martha helping to entangle them (for surely the Entente Cordiale authorizes reference to a French classic ?) in *Liaisons Dangereuses*. Nations are nowadays as Virgins were in Clarissa's day : they are not encouraged to know certain things ; their innocence is ignorance ; they are foolish Virgins bred up and led about by foolish though often cunning guardians ; whence in the present instance the misadventure described by my Puppet Satan. If the Nations, all and sundry, were not more given to laying blame upon one another, they might say like Gretchen, "*Und alles was dazu mich trieb, ach, war so gut! ach war so lieb.*" And doubtless, even as the voice of the Eternal answered for the poor heroine when Mephistopheles exultingly cried out : "*Sie ist gerichtet,*" so likewise, the Eternities will say of everyone of these present Nations *chorus peccatorum* : "*Sie ist gerettet.*" Absolved assuredly in the life of memory ; but alas, not saved, any more than Gretchen, from the crime, the torture and the shame upon earth.

What sentence, or what absolution, will be the lot of those grave and reverend seniors who allowed, or encouraged, the downfall of those poor foolish Virgins dancing in Satan's

Ballet? Surely on them also, though in less pitying accents, and certainly with no future glory as compensation, will be pronounced a "not guilty." "Since we must not deem it guilt on the part of those believing themselves, because others believe them, wise, if they prove as foolish as their victims. Still there is a difference. The poor virgins knew themselves to be ignorant of the world and its ways, whence indeed their trust in such untrustworthy guardians; whereas those guardians plumed themselves upon, sometimes trafficked in, the wisdom, the experience, the foresight which they lacked.

That is why (as Romain Rolland has suggested) our guides and guardians, moralists, philosophers, priests, journalists, as much as persons in office, stand to cut a sorry figure before posterity, singling out, as they do, one of themselves, e.g., the deposed and defeated Kaiser, as most convenient for hanging, but with no thought for some quiet Potter's Field suicide for themselves. Heaven forbid such a thought! The pachydermatous ones go on as heretofore, splash and tumble, rearing (scripturally) their rhinoceros horn. Those thinner-skinned and clearer-sighted no longer deny that however incommensurable the enemy's guilt, yet the ways even of the Nations confided to their guidance do show seamy sides: inordinate greediness, furtive paying of blackmail, sharp practice, and rather disgusting symptoms of victory—let alone intoxication; horrible affairs, famine and anarchy in the future and already the present. Being thus distressed in their good taste and good feeling, these sensitive and sated among (at least) *this* Nation's guardians, have made and duly published a dreadful yet not inconvenient discovery: that this war now barely over is *not* the war they wisely and virtuously inaugurated those four odd long years ago. Its character has become debased, its motives and manners horribly transformed. Fighting (they point out) cannot fail to brutalize the best of us, particularly when the Enemy is a brute to begin with. Fighting is, after all, a form of contact, and we know you cannot touch pitch without being defiled. Also the imperative need of rapid, secret action, above all of absolute unanimity, puts an end (temporarily let us hope!) to self-government and self-criticism; and those

two purifiers once discarded, why, robbery, mendacity, oppression, corruption of all kinds, were bound to grow habitual. Evil passions have inevitably awakened in war : they have even required, for the attainment of victory, to be kept broad awake. As always, opportunity has tempted the best into sinful courses ; ideals have been forgotten, base means ceased to be redeemed by noble aims ; to put it plainly Militarism, Machiavellianism, the Balance of Power, and general grab, which we were fighting to extirpate from the earth's surface, have become dominant, both as a (regrettable) mode of compassing the victory of Righteousness, and likewise as that victory's first and most visible result. These melancholy realities they confide to us, conjuring us to put an end to them now the war is safely over. They even suggest that by a horrid irony of fate, the very youths whose self-sacrificing idealism led them exultant into the Purest of All Wars, happened, just because they *were* so ready to obey the call of duty, to be among the earliest casualties, the world being thus automatically mulcted of the needful minimum of the virtues indispensable to decent national existence. *It is no longer the same war*, these moralists have been sadly hinting for a few months past. It is no longer the right war. Not *their* war which, at this moment (January, 1919), is making the war's great aim a touch-and-go business; in fact, but for themselves and President Wilson (who two years ago had declared for peace *without* victory), an almost hopeless affair.

Thus do they sigh, and sighing, wash their (already so pure) hands. Sigh for the world and also a little for their own disappointment ; since what a horrid fate for a moralist to find that his own beloved uniquely moral war has turned, well ! somewhat less unique and moral. How cruel for those who boldly unsheathed the Sword of Peace to recognize that the instrument in question, having got out of order by over-long use, and somewhat infected with nasty germs (doubtless originating in the Enemy !), is no longer sharp and clean enough to surgeon Europe into perfect health.

## II

Such is the lament of the War-Idealists. One feels for

them. It must be dreadfully disappointing to have to recognize one's own ewe lamb, one's pride and joy, in some painted, poisonous lady front out of Mrs. Warren's Establishment ; or, if one is a German War-Idealist, in the bespattered, lapidated, starvation-fainting Gretchen of the pillory where Germany now stands. But leaving those infatuated Enemy Peoples out of reckoning, all one's sympathies go forth to the sincere, the noble grief of one's own countrymen telling us that *the war is no longer the same war*. Until it flashes across one's mind that the Nations confided to their high-minded care are perhaps even more to be pitied than they. The poor innocents could not be expected to know that certain courses so attractive, nay ideal, have a way of landing those who take to them in situations and habits of a very different character : subterfuges and deceptions, blackmailing by ruffians, tampering with queer drugs, madness, suicide or merely residence in such houses and in such company as my Puppet Satan describes with perhaps puritanical over-emphasis. The Nations were not aware of what war might do with their bodies and especially with their souls. But how about their guides and guardians ?

One might almost suppose them to have supposed that the particular thing called a European War would remain carefully unchanged like a man sitting for his portrait ; keep itself faithfully, accurately, to their definition. Such suppositions are quite common to all of us ordinary human beings when, as the saying is, we turn *wishes into horses*. Unless obliged, we do not naturally face the notion of unpleasant change. Except Ronsard, who was evidently more bent on literature than on love, no lover ever thought of his beloved as a venerable and wizen grand-dame. And if fond Mothers do often see their baby boys as strong, successful men, it is always with the proviso that they return to confide their little knocks and scrapes at their mother's knee. In our affections we are all Joshuas, bidding the sun stop at whatever point in the Heavens is to our liking. The sun, however, does *not* stop, nor does anything beneath it. Except our poor, inorganic, dead-as-a-door-nail, definition. Now *their* definition of this war, *they* being those idealizing politicians and moralists

whose disappointment commands our sympathy—their definition of this war was as a high, disinterested, pure, lovely, flaming humanitarian enterprise, a crusade. But the crusades, I mean the real ones, did not remain the Sir Galahad affairs of their vigil of arms. There were regrettable brutalities and rapacities, a systematic grabbing of loot, and of what we should nowadays call “concessions” and “protectorates”; also very queer adoptions (as was alleged against the Knights Templar) of the most questionable rites and heresies of the Pagans, let alone initial treaties with filibustering Doges and such like, necessary to get those astute persons to crusade with one. The crusades did not always remain the *same* crusades; each separate crusade did not remain the same crusade. Indeed, if there is a genuine fact which history shows (though she shows, thanks to Clio, very few genuine ones) it is, as for the rest the less glorious sciences of nature demonstrate, that nothing ever does, has, or can remain, *the same*. So why should this war? Indeed our guides and guardians are now busy setting forth how the change came about, could not fail to come about for a variety of reasons which they enumerate as I have paraphrased them in the foregoing note. They are most clearly cognisant of the psychological, sociological, political forces which have brought the war’s moral, if not downfall, at least, slip. Only, as the lackey of Molière’s Learned Ladies said about his experimental knowledge of gravitation “*Je m’en suis aperçu étant par terre.*”

Unluckily for one’s sympathy with our guides and guardians, unfortunately likewise for the world, present and future, it is not merely they and their ideals that are “*par terre,*” with only President Wilson or the Social Revolution, as you prefer, to pick up the pieces. There are those guided, or shall we say? misguided, Nations also.

### III

It is from no sentimental illusions about the purity and charm of Nations taken as wholes that I have made my Puppet Satan compare the various Belligerents to Virgins

entrapped, say rather, calmly, blunderingly conducted into the Establishment of Mrs. Warren. A student of the why and wherefore of art and imagination, as well as a dweller in several lands, I have long since parted with the natural habit of seeing the faithful portrait of any Nation in the works of its painters and poets. Likewise I have learned to understand, hence to restrain, the even more alluring tendency to credit the inhabitants of any country with the sublimity or charm of that country's landscape; these, like all private poetry and art, are dreams good to indulge, once we have recognized their beneficent and sacred dreamstuff. Apart from dreams like these, loving or hating any Nation as a Whole (one's own included) is surely loving the idiots, the ruffians, the presumptuous mediocrities; and similarly hating the saints and geniuses, the modest workers which every nation must contain. Nay worse; such wholesale preference and abhorrence implies our losing the sense of the enormous mass of possible and actual suffering and happiness which seems to be the one certain and supreme reality common to all aggregates of human beings. Which brings me to remark that it is their community, their union (though so little suspected alas !) in present agony and loss of future joy, which strikes me as the fact to be remembered about these belligerent Nations, instead of their inscrutable gradations of responsibility for it all. Indeed, what responsibility can there be (letting alone that responsibility shifts, passes from side to side, if pursued into historical origins), what true responsibility can there be in any existing nation, seeing that every nation is still made up, ninety-nine-hundredths of it, of men and women too overworked, and (adding the leisured hundredth) too obsoletely educated by Clio and her sham Greeks and Romans and Hebrews, to know what they are doing, or what is being done with them, while wars and the rivalries whence they spring are accepted as part of normal existence.

In this sole reference, therefore, I do hold that all the peoples suffering and inflicting suffering (the starvation blockade is not yet raised † April, 1919) are innocent, though nowise admirable, victims of other victims; and makers of

further victims, decoyed, not knowing how or perhaps even wanting to resist, by Fate, which means the Past, personified in their guides and guardians; entrapped into the abode of unlawful excitement, of suffering and sterility. Nations in each of whom there is the potential harlot as well as the potential, the wasted, mother.

It is not, therefore, as I began this note by saying, because I really see the Nations of Satan's Ballet as pure or lovely, that I have introduced that simile of the decoyed Virgins. But merely inasmuch as it brings out clearly an essential (but largely overlooked) aspect of this subject of war: the momentous changes, far-reaching, complicated, uncalculated, sometimes incalculable, which one single step (like those poor metaphoric maidens' *faux pas*) can bring about in the life of body and soul, because that one act happens to awaken dormant instincts, bring into play latent faculties, set up new relationships, set going new sequences of action and reaction.

#### IV

The thought embodied in that metaphor of the Virgins and the House of Ill Fame first became clear in my mind on reading how, at the Presidential election, the women of Illinois had voted for Wilson on the express score that he had kept America out of the war.

"These women," I said to myself (not much over two years ago, but it feels like fifty), "these women are at present feeling war to be something outside them, something foreign, and evitable. But if Wilson had not kept them out, their feeling would now be that war was, on the contrary, *inevitable*; that it had become an essential, a dominant part of themselves, had absorbed and made them consubstantial with itself. They would have been transformed, their feelings, interests, aims, judgments, their occupations, maybe the bulk of their life, would have undergone a new orientation; that of *being in*."

This I said to myself one November morning of 1916. Six months later America *had come in*. The transformation had taken place, more uncompromisingly and violently even than with so many of our own pacifists two years before.

*Being in the war*, I then recognized, has considerable analogy with some of the phenomena of being in love ; the analogy due to the little word *in*, and the amazing difference between its implications and those of the other little word *outside* ; *outside* signifying contemplation, discrimination, judgment, the *Alter* ; *in* signifying feeling, will, action, the *Ego*. This change of aspect, is, however, only part of the business. The essential is that, having surrendered to a given alternative, you can no longer go back upon it, because that surrender implies a change in your situation and relations, above all a change in your own emotions and ways of seeing. Yourself are changed, because a great many circumstances due to being *in* are entirely different from those of being *out* ; changed also by the abolition of the previous state of *not being in* (either love or war), and effacement of every vestige of your previous power (let alone your desire) of *keeping out*.

For Freedom of the Will, in the least metaphysical, the most empirical sense, is not, as theologians used to teach, a permanent possession of the soul. Its very essence is that it lapses by surrender ; and that nine times out of ten, the freedom to do, or to refrain, is lost by the initial choice ; and, as regards love or war, can be recovered only when the new circumstances which that decision has brought about, and that new self of yours, have run their course and been exhausted. You are a free agent so long as you have not set that stone, *yourself*, a-rolling. Once the push given, the brink left behind, the forces outside and inside yourself, the strange unsuspected attraction, weight and velocity, reduce you to helplessness. In the case of sexual love, obscure impulses, perhaps hitherto unknown to the individual, have arisen. That something similar arises in war, I mean the awakening of actual physiological conditions, seems quite likely, even setting aside the notion of certain stimulating glands becoming active, as Sherrington tells us, in fighting animals. Be this as it may, war sets in motion a whole complex of psychological and sociological forces, hitherto experienced only partially in private matters, or, when we come to the phenomena of national unanimity, not experienced at all. In both cases, that of *falling in love* and *coming into a war*, you have left the solid familiar ground

whose inequalities your eyes and feet had long since learned to measure and foresee. You have jumped into a sea, whose dept. and whose extent is incalculable to your experience, in which your soul will sink or swim according as it possesses capacities which you have never tested. Perhaps it is this suddenness, this incalculableness; of sexual passion which has caused mankind to fence it round at what may strike one as a very needless distance, to permit (or try to permit) access only by official piers and wharves. War has hitherto been too much a predatory speculation of states in search of slaves and tribute, of monarchs and financiers seeking fresh conscripts and new dumping grounds, for war's even more incalculable, because vaster, dangers to be similarly surrounded by taboos. President Wilson, who seems to believe that he can use just as much or as little of war, and of war's secondary results, as suits his purpose of abolishing it for evermore—President Wilson said : “*Let there be war,*” and the women of Illinois doubtless fell to molesting anyone among themselves who had not surrendered to that change, so brief itself, so endless in its results.

This explains the case (and the reason for my whole simile) of him or her who has *not* said *yes* to war. That person is different from those who have ; a virgin though not necessarily in a complimentary sense, indeed the other party might say, a eunuch. It is a case of Dante's “*che fiamma d'esto incendio non mi tange.*” For the flame of war burns not merely towns and granaries, nor even human holocausts, it ravages, sterilizes, blackens, sometimes fitfully illuminating, the soul.

## V

Among the unforeseen evil consequences of war between modern peoples are the hypocrisy, the unfairness, the self-stultification, the sin against Reality, involved in justifying it ; in throwing all the fault on the other party and shutting one's eyes to one's past own commissions and omissions.

It is the doing of a deed, the making of a choice which obliges us to its justification. We may reprobate the thought of the thing before or (long) after. But in public affairs,

where there is generally no disinterested looker-on to bring us to reason, the doing, the choosing, involves justification of the deed and the choice. Real criticism would have checked this war ; but alas (and this is part of the incalculable mischief) war checks real criticism.

## VI

In the face of this incalculable, or at all events, uncalculated, secondary mischief, as much as of the more obvious losses to which belligerents make up their mind, or pretend they had, I venture to assert that it is as bad to allow war for a good cause as for a bad one. For everyone believes his cause to be good or makes his instruments believe it to be good. Whereas by forbidding war for a good cause you implicitly forbid it for a bad.

Might it not be reasonable to say that a good cause ceases to be good when it necessitates, when it drags with it, unforeseen effects which are evil and sources of evil ? Could people not be taught that when we use the seemingly present tense "a thing *is* so and so," we really mean, when we mean anything at all, that the thing will react in a given way to given tests, that it will have certain consequences ; in fact that future good is implied in the assertion of present goodness ?

*Easter, 1919.*

### POSTSCRIPT TO THE NOTES

In the preface to this volume I have compared the ideas embodied in my War-Play, and in the foregoing little psychological essays presented as its notes, to the unexpected crop of plants, unlovely, harsh to the touch, sometimes even stinging, and nearly always rank and bitter, which replace the cherished flowers and fruit of some devastated garden. By which I mean that, however much their seed was in my mind, these thoughts were given no chance of growth so long as pleasanter ones could still be cultivated before the war. And I added that for the sake of whatever tonic or cleansing property they might possess, they were worth gathering, like those unmetaphorical weeds of which old herbals tell us that they are "good in cases of frenzy," or, at all events, "sovereign against the vapours." Like such medicinal herbs, my war-thoughts are not intended for pot-pourri pots or lavender-bags. And the decoction thereof once made, it was more useful and also seemlier not to disguise their quality with sugary moralities, still less dilute it with one's tears.

This refusal may cause both play and notes to be treated as immoral, cynical, heartless, and what is more to the point, depressing. There is no doubt it makes them, even to my own taste, extraordinarily unattractive.

For what do we mean by *attractive* in such a reference, except whatever suits our heart's desire? Sometimes that desire, always natural and explicable, is legitimate, even noble, because divorced from belief, hence from deceit, the desire for contemplated harmony which art satisfies. More frequently, however, the word *attractive* refers to the unavowed hankerings after whatever increases the weight and bulk of our self-satisfaction, or allows us to rest undisturbed and dream pleasant nonsense.

Now the whole underlying theme of the play and the notes is precisely that although (indeed just because) mankind is justified in trying to make the universe attractive to itself, it is nevertheless probable that the universe has not been

made (nor made ~~itself~~) for this sole purpose of being attractive to us. Moreover that the rest of things and processes which we can see or infer, all that I have summed up under the (quite unmetaphysical) heading "Reality," have become tolerable to man only by man's gradual adaptation to their nature. And that while such beneficent adaptation of ourselves to all this (as I have called it) *otherness* is often facilitated by due recognition thereof, such an adaptation on our part, which to us seems on the contrary *adapting things to us*, is certainly impeded by our taking for granted that there must already exist an order, or a Creator, of the Universe, entirely bent upon securing our peace of mind, including our belief in our good sense and goodness, and satisfying our standards of moral fitness.

Thinking over the war, and trying to understand its spiritual phenomena, would have cured me of any surviving anthropocentrism of this kind. It has made it intelligible to me that although our feelings, hence our strivings, make each of us appear to himself as separate from, opposite to, and actively dealing with sundry items called *people, things and circumstances* which can sometimes be used for our purposes, but quite as often are, as we phrase it, "in our way," yet that is a mere illusion, due to the psychological fact that feeling and striving have a warm, an inner, an intimate quality; while on the contrary *seeing* (especially mental seeing) is somehow extraordinarily cold, external, a sort of half-way meeting between what is and what is not *ourselves*. Whereas in reality, and in the reality of all things, we are all of us just part and parcel of all the rest; and the rest is not a bit more inert than we; in fact our emotions and our will are inextricably connected with and determined by the wills or the ways of everything else. Whence results a practical corollary, namely : That, contrary to the views of our latter-day spiritual guides, we shall secure a tolerable existence (including tolerable to our moral nature) by seeking to understand what other things, processes and persons *are* irrespective of our own desires about them, rather than by doing exercises of *will-tension*, and speeding up our (already hustled) endeavours. This comes to saying that instead of thinking quite so much

about our aims, we should pay more attention to our *means*, which always include something or somebody not ourself, and most often regarded as having no characteristics except those which may serve or thwart our own purposes.

To persons nervously clinging (as I catch myself occasionally) to the desirability of unselfishness, or at all events to the efficacy of its notion, I would point out the reassuring circumstance that this moral philosophy really pivots entirely upon a kind of altruism ; in fact, upon the importance of the *alter*, the other or otherness, to the *ego*. The views embodied in this volume, and expressed, since he has most interest in and against them, by Satan the Waster of all Kinds of Virtue, are in truth a more widely applicable, though, alas ! less easily applied, altruism. Altruism not implying the sacrifice of our own wishes (which oftenest sacrifice our less dominant to our more dominant one among themselves) for the alleged benefit of an *alter* ; but altruism which takes into consideration the nature, apparent or conceivable, of that *alter*, and the feelings he is likely to have as well as, and perhaps in opposition to, the feelings we have about him.

To all such Altruism as this war puts a stop ; because war implies struggle, and struggle passion, and passion delusion ; because during war men are hag-ridden by an aim, and grow callous to the means. That is why these thoughts have occurred to me while looking on at the War ; and why I offer them to such of my juniors as do not want to look on at war again.

*August, 1919.*





